CICELY:

OR

THE ROSE OF RABY.

An Historic Novel.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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CICELY OF RABY.

YES, my beloved friend, I obey, and continue my strange narration.

Agnes was confined to her room, ill with fatigue and anxiety; I scarce saw her, but leaving her to the care of my woman, spent the day in attending the duke.

Again it was night, and Orleans seeming to sleep, I went into the adjoining closet, resolved at length to see the contents of the packet, the opening and reading of which seemed to teem with fatality.

So indelibly are the expressions imprinted on my mind, though so long ago, that I believe I can repeat them to you without alteration.

"Cicely," began the prince, "you accuse, you condemn me unheard.

"I have conjured you to listen to me —this you refuse; yes, peremptorily, you have denied this one—this last request— I asked but a patient hearing, and you refuse me.

"Ah! cruel Cicely, how shall the wretched Orleans convince you that you are dearer to him than life, fame, or liberty!—as the bleeding form, once animated, lies before you, will you spurn it from you with added disgust?

"Will you not give one tear to my memory? will you not piously offer one prayer to the Fountain of Mercy for him who dare not pray for himself? do you dash the offered packet in disdain from you, even when I am dying at your feet?

"Will

"Will you extend your resentments beyond mortality?—Will you refuse then—even then, when the yet-enamoured Orleans is a heap of dust, to read his vindication?

"Ah! no; I see the gentle Cicely—the pearly drop that glistens on her cheek; 'tis the precious drop of pity, and it falls like balm upon my wounded soul.

"Yes, you will not refuse to read what I have written at horrid intervals, with a heart rent with anguish, and a brain maddened by despair."

This was written on the cover to several sheets;—his vindication began as follows:—

"When I first saw you at the castle of St. Aubin, I expected to have found you look, what your age declared, a child in manners and appearance. I was taken by surprise, my very senses lost in wonder!—scarce was I master of myself, as

you knelt and thanked me for your liberty.

"Resolving at that moment to convey you to Bidet, thither I accompanied you.

"I was inspired by a passion whose duration must end only with my life. Ardent in my temper, my love partook of my disposition; yet I was awed by your virtue, your delicacy, your propriety of conduct, which enforced, as it were, that deference I reluctantly paid you.

"Your beauty, which had so suddenly seized my imagination, your thousand amiable and engaging qualities, your accomplishments of mind, and grace in every movement, as I watched over you, increased my love to enthusiastic idolatary—to madness.

"Your rank was not beneath the alliance of a prince; but you were English, and your country the declared enemy of mine. Already was I married, and though, when

when I first took you to Bidet, I might (perhaps did) entertain a wish, a vain, presumptuous hope, that yielding to the excess of my passion, your youthful heart would catch the flame—if mutual, who should censure, who condemn the beauteous daughter of Westmoreland, if, despising the laws made for vulgar souls, she loved me for myself alone, and enjoying all the raptures of unrestrained passion, sequestered beneath the shades of Bidet, which her presence made paradise, regarded not the splendour of the courts of Charles or Henry, nor envied the pomp or titles which would have surrounded her as the duchess of Orleans; that forgetting any other place existed but Bidet, we should mutually have lived for each other; its ancient forest the extent of our wanderings, we should have looked down with calm indifference or contempt on the poor

mortals who busied themselves about the splendid nothings of the world.

" Yet, oh forgive those impious thoughts! I soon felt my error, nor were you sensible I had formed ideas so derogatory to your pure mind. I challenge you, Cicely, to say—did I ever infringe on the commands you gave to your attendants—ever intrude on your retired hours?

" No, Cicely, those ideas fled before you. I respected your delicacy of situation; nor can you—no, you have not accused me of impropriety of behaviour; nor was I without hopes that those respectful attentions so assiduously paid were unnoticed. I saw you grew confident in my honour, and I flattered myself that your eyes spake with more sincerity the language of your heart, and that there the happy Orleans had other claims than those your tongue assented to.

" Alas,

"Alas, Cicely! could you think it possible that expressions of friendship would satisfy the sanguine temper of him whose every look, every accent, breathed passion?

"I commissioned a person of tried prudence and fidelity to represent to the pope how necessary it was, for various reasons, a divorce should be granted me. —Bribes and promises were dealt with no sparing hand.

"Meanwhile I assailed you by every art. For you, Cicely, I would have deserted my friends—for you, I would have allied myself to the English, only stipulating revenge on the house of Burgundy—for you, I would have sacrificed honour—fame.

"To me did the French look up as the leader of the war, as the director of their counsels. Good Heavens! in the madness of despair, I would have basely sa-

crificed my bleeding country, whilst fondly flattering myself with giving her peace. For you I did sacrifice France. Alas, Cicely! how many a widow, how many an orphan, may curse me! Those happy, those bewitching days I spent with you at Bidet, should have been employed in forming my troops, in opposing the English, who had taken Harfleur, and overrun the province of Normandy.

"The delusion was near its close; for, famished and wasted by disease, your brave countrymen were retreating through Picardy.

"We had assembled a numerous army; they were within a few days' march of the English. The fate of two mighty nations seemed to hang on your lips.

"I was roused to a pitch little short of madness, when a courier arrived from Rome—such and such specified conditions

tions being complied with, I was told the divorce should be speedily accomplished.

"By lady St. Aubin was the dauphin Louis informed of your detention; in haughty terms (or at least what I deemed so) he commanded me to restore you. Almost frantic with rage—torn with alternate despair and hope—scarce knowing whether or not at once to abandon the dauphin, and trust to the influence I hoped I had in your heart for my recompence, and thus gratify at once my love and revenge, I set out at nightfal for Bidet, and next day asked your final resolve.—What a night of inquietude, of misery! Would my troops patiently, at my command, range themselves under English banners? What was I about to do? I would leave Bidet without seeing you. No, Orleans will not betray his country; in a few days the starving English and their rash king would be pri-

soners; the relations, the friends of Cicely, would be at my disposal.

"Gladly then would the earl of Westmoreland sanction, would approve my love—then you would listen to me—then would you no longer disguise your sentiments—would avow your love. I rose, and calling my servant, was told you were ill. I flew to the apartment—to you, whom I meant not again to behold till I brought your family with me as captives; I supported you, as I thought, dying; you recovered—your expressions I fancied bordered on madness—wild and incoherent sentences, which I understood not, except that you for ever declined all my offers. Intent on saving that honour, which ought to be dearer than life, I left you with an anguished heart, and began to prepare for my journey back to the army. You bid me to your presence.

"Yes, Cecily, again I saw you.—Ah! that

that meeting—there was I undone!—there was I deceived! Had I left Bidet without seeing you, what mischief, what horror of mind, should I have escaped! —Yes, Cicely, I might this day have been guiltless—stop my hand—let me not say of murder—of the blood of ——Oh! misery, misery!—accursed was that day!

"Must I, Cicely, repeat to you an interview you surely have not yet forgotten? I saw you unhappy, agitated, dejected—you bade me be careful of my life.—Ah! why, if not dear to you, that charge? Examine your heart, my adored Cicely! Was not Orleans, the enraptured Orleans, at that moment more necessary to your happiness than you would confess?

"Yes, Cicely trembled at the idea of the danger to which I should be exposed; the soft sigh rose from that gentle heart—the tear stood in your eye—you took the scarf that folded round your waist, which

had been embroidered at Bidet, which, you had told me, I should never in triumph display.—'No, Orleans,' you said, when I entreated for it, 'the knight for whom this is destined must be the defender, the champion of Cicely—not her oppressor, nor her gaoler, whom, as such, she cannot love—shall she give favours to those she does not love?—No, my lord, what her heart impels her to reject, no circumstances shall make her accept; obeying its impulse now, she will not deny you this scarf;' and tying it round my waist, concluded by saying, 'Here, Orleans, shall it stay, perhaps for ever; for whom at Bidet shall its sad owner see, who will assert her cause?'—and you sighed—'ah! who at Bidet that she loves will she behold?'

"Yes, Cicely, you tied this scarf, so often longed for, so often refused, around me.

"You conjured me to spare the life of your father; I bade you adieu—I tore

myself

myself from your presence; yet, as I passed through the gates of the castle, I lingered. Might I not yet stay at Bidet, or rather, hastening to the army, endeavour to save the English from destruction? My retinue waited my arrival—I leaped upon horseback, and without venturing to look back—without venturing to certify myself whether your eyes followed me, I gallopped through the forest, nor turned my head till the antique towers of Bidet vanished from my view.

"I joined the troops committed to my charge, and tried to lose in hurry and dissipation the remembrance of Cicely and Bidet."

I had got thus far, Matilda, in the narrative of the duke, when I learnt he was awake, but delirious. I went to the bedside—he started as if he knew me, but immediately lost the idea. Jaques sat

supporting

supporting the prince, the tears chasing each other down his venerable cheeks.

"My dear lady, leave this chamber; incessantly is my unhappy master raving of you; expose not yourself to scenes which, were your heart firmer than adamant, would melt it."

"Alas!" I replied, "these are the last offices I shall have it in my power to pay the son of my noble, my generous preserver! Never, ah! never will the prince again offend me with his love!—Yes, too sure he loved me." I knelt—I took the hand burning with fever—"Hear me," I cried, "solemnly swear, I will not abandon Orleans till he is laid at rest in the tomb—or," sighing, "till recovered, he quits Raby for ever."

Father Francis, entering in the habit of his order, stood at the foot of the bed.

"Art thou," cried the duke, "the priest of St. Aubin who married at Calais lady Cicely to her brother's page? Dost thou know

know he is dead? Knowest thou not who killed him?"

I let go the hand I had held, and sinking on the floor, hid my face on my knees.

"Go, go," continued the prince, "pray for his soul—how—too late am I told he was her husband. Go, I say, pray for his soul. At Barcelona will I found a chapel—there shall masses be sung without number. Speak, shall his blood rest upon me?"

He stopped, then again resumed—"So lady Cicely relents at last—yes, at Bidet I remember she told me she did not hate me." Again he paused, then exclaimed, "Nay, it shall not be at Bidet—I will marry her at Paris—St. Denis shall witness my joy." Again he stopped.

His ideas took another turn, and he cried, "Hush!—is not that her harp? How soft, how solemn it sounds!—it calls me away—I come, pure spirit; I see thou

beckonest

beckonest me—nay, say not so; I did not think that—yet will I follow where thou leadest."

Wearied out with raving, the prince sunk into the arms of Jaques in a swoon; it was some time ere he was restored to life, when he again breathed. Father Francis administered a medicine, which, should it fail of giving a turn to his disorder in twenty-four hours, he gave up all hopes of his life.

During the day the fever continued very high; the night was expected by the good father to decide his fate. Anxiously I seated myself by the couch of Orleans; his slumbers were broken and disturbed till past midnight, when I began to entertain hopes; the fever was apparently abated; he slept quietly, and the delirium had ceased.

Father Francis, at my request, threw himself on a bed in an adjoining apartment.

Jaques

Jaques slumbered on his seat, and drawing forth the packet, I continued the duke's narration :—

" How was I astonished by the arrival of a courier, who informed me a youth had been taken in your apartment! I was told you were safe—your lover secured. Nor fame, nor ambition, had power to detain me. Leaving orders with a faithful domestic to conceal my absence, if possible, and quitting the camp in disguise, without stopping to rest or sleep, I crossed the provinces which lay between the army and Bidet. When I reached the forest, the night was far advanced. As I came in view of the castle—'Ah,' sighed I, 'Cicely rests there; yet, ere I leave Bidet, her minion shall feel my power.' Entering, I ordered a light carriage, with six of the fleetest horses in my stables, to be got ready,

dy, resolving to carry you with me to the army. Almost frantic with rage and jealousy, I flew up to the western tower. Your women were buried in sleep—I bade them rise and precede me to your chamber. —They attempted to open the door—it resisted their efforts—no voice answered to their call. I pushed against it with violence —we entered—I looked round—all was still—I called you—you answered not; —I drew back the curtains—the bed was empty—you were gone;—yet how could you have escaped?—all appeared fast.

'Wretches!' I furiously cried, 'your lives shall atone for this treachery!—dissemble not with me—speak! where is she?—where is the lady Cicely?' Drawing my sword, scarcely was I restrained from wreaking my vengeance on those around me.

"I ordered them to bring from his dungeon the chief object of my fury; then

then recalling my orders, went myself.

"I turned with hasty hand the ponderous key, and pushing back the door, cried, 'Come out, thou wretch! thou midnight thief!—speakest thou not?'—I rushed in, and at that moment would have sacrificed him to my resentment;—but I found him not—the dungeon was empty. I was speechless with rage, and dashed to the ground the person whose business it was to have the charge of the prison.

'Accursed villains! how have you deceived me!' I exclaimed; then turning from the empty dungeon, and raging like a fury through every apartment of the castle, sought you in vain.

"In the governor I had every reason to put implicit confidence; his long and faithful services demanded it; yet even he could scarcely convince me that he had not connived at your escape.

"It was indispensably necessary I should

should return to the troops under my command—that I should immediately quit Bidet.

" Exacting a solemn oath from the governor, and ordering every possible step to be taken for your recovery, I threw myself into the carriage which waited for me, and in the most violent perturbation of mind again left Bidet. Having sent messengers to every seaport to detain you, I flattered myself that yet you might be recovered, as, if fled to the English army, a few days, I doubted not, would restore you to me.

" Surrounded by my soldiers, I vowed internally vengeance on you, and on the youth who had assisted in so strange a way your escape.

" I tore the scarf from my bosom, and threw it at my feet. In my hopes of revenge, every other idea faded away. I imagined, on your knees, in a few hours you would implore my protection—no,

I would

I would not hear—I would not listen to that syren voice—I would convey you back to Bidet with all the family of Neville in my train as captives.

"But soon love reigned triumphant, and fancy changed the scene; I would carefully conduct you to the towers of your fathers; there you would declare your love—the earl of Westmoreland would say, Orleans alone deserves the hand of Cicely, and would sue as a vanquished man to his conqueror.

"I already saw myself your husband, saw you adorn the first rank in France and in England; you were idolized, you were my all of happiness—such were my daydreams, Cicely.

"The two armies lay in sight of each other. As I learnt you had reached the camp of Henry, a thousand contending passions assailed me. The night was spent in riot by the French, and I strove to stifle every feeling but resentment.

"The

"The armies engaged each other; but, too sure of victory, we despised a mere handful of war-worn soldiers, wasted by disease and famine, who thus insolently opposed themselves to the troops of France. Neglecting proper precautions, the event of the day proved our error.

"During the fight I was encountered by a youth who fiercely defied me. 'The wrongs of lady Cicely Neville sit,' he cried, 'on my sword.'—I supposed him your brother, and casting my eyes on him, looked for the haughty crest of your family, but saw it not, nor even the ensigns of knighthood emblazoned on his armour. I despised the meanness of such an antagonist—I turned in disdain;—again he defied me, and his ardency convinced me this was the lover who stole you from Bidet—from me—if so, the enterprise ennobled him. We assailed each other with fury. Need I relate the issue?—shall I say I was vanquished—relate

to

to you his generosity—or say that the close of day saw me a prisoner to those English for whom I had appointed dungeons and chains?

"Lady St. Aubin saw me at Calais, yet I spoke not to her of Cicely.—Ah! how could I, a prisoner—how should I pretend to her? What! could my proud soul stoop to self-condemnation—to say to lady St. Aubin, would she ask for the humiliated Orleans an interview—that he repented, and sued for forgiveness?—At this my haughty spirit recoiled.

"I heard not your name mentioned, yet were not you the less remembered by me, though obliged to smother my passion in my own bosom; and although a prisoner in England, whither I suppose you returned, I was yet ignorant what had become of you, and whether the youth, who had so nobly asserted your cause, and by whom I was doubly

van-

vanquished, had not ere this been rewarded by your hand.

"By a pretence which I have not time or patience to relate, I was visited by the dowager of Warwick, who at first appeared touched with pity for my misfortunes. She renewed her visits, in one of which she began to talk of the Nevilles, and warmly praised to me your beauty —your accomplishments. 'What pity,' said she, 'prudence was not added to her other graces!' She saw the effect her hints had produced, and stopped; I had started from my seat, and traversed with agitated looks the apartment.

'Why,' said the artful countess, 'those emotions? why this quick transition of countenance? Are you sick, my lord? Was it possible you could ever have seen the lovely Cicely, I should suppose it was the mention of her name that had so strangely affected you.'

'Speak!

'Speak! oh speak, lady Warwick, for ever on this subject—talk of Cicely for ever—I will listen. Where is the beauteous Neville? quick! tell me. Is she married? is she lost for ever to those eyes that doted on her. Alas! if she is not, will she listen to the vows of a captive?'

'Peace! peace! are you,' resumed lady Warwick, 'the noble Frenchman whose offers she despised, whom she left for her brother's page? A boy, my lord, brought up by the charity of the Nevilles, fed on the offals of Raby, he could but express himself thus; nay, he could not appear more agitated.'

"I was no longer able to contain; but throwing myself on a seat, exclaimed—'Yes, lady Warwick, it was I, the now captive Orleans, who then was prince of a large domain, that cruel Cicely left to misery—to despair. Yes, lady Warwick, she fled from him who would for

her have rashly sacrificed fame—country—every thing but love.'

'Was it,' cried the countess, with pretended astonishment, 'possible she was insensible to your love? Sure, when the duke of Orleans sued, whose rank, though second only to kings, was not so superior as his manly grace and accomplishments were above the rest of his sex—what! was it from the first of mankind, from the all-powerful, all-fascinating Orleans, for whom the first women in the world have sighed, that she fled—and, oh! shame! shame! took for her companion a wretch so mean?'

"Lady Warwick saw my perturbation, and paused. I endeavoured to thank her for her good opinion, and the interest she seemed to take in me.

'Ah!' said she, 'I could not conceal my emotions; I was carried beyond my usual mode of expression in my amazement at the strange choice this poor girl has

has made, and can but attribute it to sorcery—how else is it possible to account for it?'

"I had of late enjoyed rather more liberty, and now understood I was obliged to the friendly intercession of the countess for it; and that, struck by my mien at first sight, and further interested by my manner, she had felt a pity for my situation which had urged her to endeavour at lightening my confinement.

"Again in warm terms did I express my gratitude.—Alas! Cicely, how little did I dream of the snare she was so artfully preparing for me! I conjured lady Warwick to inform me where you were.

'It is,' she replied, 'said by the Nevilles, lady Cicely is left in a monastery of noble Burgundian ladies, where she means to take the veil.'

'Do you,' I rejoined with quickness, 'lady Warwick, believe this well-invent-

ed tale?' Her manner had convinced me she did not.

'Frankly then, Orleans, I do not.'

'Where then,' said I, 'is Cicely? nor convents shall shield, nor seas separate her from me. Where, my dear lady, oh say! is the wretch who seduced her? what shall protect him?'

"The countess saw my very soul on the rack, and, resolved to bend me to her vile purposes by every artifice, imagined the longer I was kept in suspense, the more eager would she find me.—'This is a question I cannot resolve you, further than that I know she is with the page, but where, by dint of inquiry, shall be quickly learnt.'

"I was soon after this entrusted to the Beauchamps, and lady Warwick, guided, as I supposed, by compassion, frequently visited me; to talk with her of you was the greatest pleasure I knew. Thus did she

she artfully fan the flame which already was too powerful.

"Thinking she had wound up my passions to the pitch she wanted, and finding I put an implicit confidence in all she said, and her plans being ripe for execution, she entered my apartment in seeming agitation—'Orleans,' said the countess, 'at length I have discovered the retreat of this pair.'

'Where, oh where, my benefactress? tell me,' I cried—'already what ages of suspense have I sustained!'

'Know,' continued lady Warwick, 'they are shielded, protected in the court of Castile; the credulous Catalina listens to the well-invented tale.—Ah Mary! blessed Virgin! what shall become of the brave lord Beauchamp, my noble son, should the claims of this impostor be allowed?'

'What,' I cried, 'does the queen regent of Castile, prudent Katherine, pro-

tect her relation in such a mean choice? Does she sanction it?

'But, lady Warwick, you called the seducer of Cicely an impostor? to what would the wretch pretend more than her love?'

'Your cause,' rejoined the countess, in a loud and spirited tone of voice, 'my lord, is mine—it is mutual. Wish you revenge?—I will aid, I will assist, in doing justice on this seducer—this usurper of rights!'

'Alas!' replied I, 'how weak is the hand that is rendered unnerved by confinement! how impotent,' said I, sighing, 'is the revenge of Orleans! how have I it in my power to assist? how is it that our cause is mutual?'

'The page,' she replied haughtily, 'forgetting his birth—forgetting he was saved by the charity of sir Robert Umfraville, looks upon his origin with contempt, and aspires to rank, to titles, to

power

power and riches. Sir William Fitzhugh, long deprived of his reason by a train of evils, far beyond the power of humanity to bear, and now in extreme old age, has been by this artful villain taught to believe he was the child of his daughter, and lord Henry Beauchamp, the eldest son of my lord:—thus would he be heir to the titles and lands of Warwick, as also to those of Cutherstone; nay more, he by this pretended descent is the only representative of the rich and noble family of D'Aranjeus in Castile. Donna Katherine has allowed the claim: I can fully prove the whole an invention, the claim false;—I have and will produce evidence, that the infant son of Theresa Fitzhugh was drowned with his nurse in the river Eure.'

"She stopped for my answer; I reflected for a moment on what I heard, and felt a conviction that the assertions of lady Warwick were false. 'Ah!' said

 I, with

I, with a dejected air, 'what do you tell me? would Catalina, descended from the house of Lancaster equally with lady Cicely, suffer her, in her court, to carry on a licentious amour? No, lady Warwick, long ere this has the holy priest united their hands; I doubt not the sage regent would not suffer so palpable an imposition; the next heirs of the old count L'Aranjeus would not submit tamely to lose the vast possessions they would otherwise inherit, to a stranger—to an impostor, who rested his title on the evidence of an old man already in dotage. I will endeavour to submit to my destiny. Cicely has, I doubt not, made a choice she need not blush at owning. Your kindness is ineffectual, lady Warwick.'

'Then,' said she, hastily rising, 'here it ceases; I told you my cause was yours, and expected on your sword our joint wrongs would have sat, till they had

fallen

fallen heavy on the hard crest of this daring impostor. But,' said she ironically, 'you will endeavour to submit to your destiny; in that endeavour I will leave you, nor doubt of your success:—to your prayers, my lord!—here have you time and solitude; true, the sword and buckler suit not with your condition. How impatient would be the revenge, that might lead you to the court of Castile, where, proudly basking in the beauty of lady Cicely's smiles, the mock lord Beauchamp boasts of his vast skill in carrying off the mistress of the before-unrivalled duke of Orleans! Does he not relate how, at the battle of Agincourt, he fought? there did he not triumph? there he vanquished Orleans, the first prince of the royal house of Valois;—nay, I wonder not such victories make him forget his origin—at Agincourt he pretended not to nobility.'

"The countess had reached the door,

when, starting from my seat, I drew her forcibly back.

'Do you leave me, lady Warwick?' I exclaimed, with an agitation that almost choked my utterance; 'renounce me?—deprive me of a friendship the only sweetener of my life? Do you leave me to misery—to disgrace—to all the torments of jealousy? What! shall the base-born minion boast of his exploits?—shall every court in Europe be taught to laugh at my shame?—No, the usurper of titles shall feel the strength of this arm; he shall not insult me any longer with impunity.'

"She pushed me from her, crying, sarcastically—'How may I believe these bravadoes?—you who so quietly relinquished her, whom you fondly supposed married to her brother's page;—nay, I doubt not your patience would serve, were you to hear him vaunt as he does, that he bore from the proud brows of Valois the laurels

laurels which so long had encircled them; that he had trampled on the lilies of France beneath his heroic steps; that he tore from Orleans the scarf of Cicely.'

"I trembled with rage as she spoke. 'Nay, hear me,' I cried, interrupting her, 'I will be heard—Catalina, the misguided Catalina, shall not protect—the court of Castile shall not shelter them; I will tear her from his arms;—yet I rave—am I not a prisoner?—I will not live in disgrace—what! to be pointed at by boys and women!—afford me, lady Warwick, I conjure you, means of revenge!—do you refuse, you shall witness what this hand is capable of—what! must I drag out here a wretched life, without an opportunity of vindicating my honour? Tell me,' and I seized her hand with violence, 'was it, is it possible that the fair Cicely, she who would have graced—whose beauty demanded an imperial diadem—tell

me, lady. Warwick, could she love—could she wed such a vaunting wretch?'

"She answered me not, but suffered my passions, ever violent, to have full scope, and enjoyed with a malignant pleasure the storm she had raised. Throwing myself hastily on the floor,—'Here,' I cried, 'is the bed henceforth of the miserable, the despised Orleans!—till I have some hopes of revenge, I will not taste of food or comfort.' Then quickly rising, I fell on my knees, 'hear me!—witness, lady Warwick, whilst I solemnly swear——'

"Laying her hand on my mouth, she bade me, with a commanding voice, follow her; scarce conscious what I was doing, I obeyed; she led to a gloomy chapel, whose doors she threw open: in silence I followed to the altar.

'Prince,' said the countess, with an air of solemnity in her manner, 'if you here

consent

consent to my conditions, I will also swear to aid you effectually.' I took the oath she required; at that moment inflamed by her artifice to a degree of desperation, I would not have scrupled to have subscribed to whatever conditions she proposed. I swore to conceal the knowledge lady Warwick had of my meditated revenge, or that she had assisted me in it; and then I swore to execute whatever she commanded, as far as regarded our mutual cause.

"She then knelt, and vowed to find me safe, certain, yet secret means of revenge, and so taken I need not disown it; but if I revealed the part she had acted, she solemnly swore to pursue me to destruction. I was struck with the horrid tenor of her oath; but revenge and disappointed love soon took full possession of me.

'Rising, 'Orleans,' said she, 'perhaps you wonder why I have not suffered my son, lord Richard, to vindicate his own cause;

cause; but I know his undesigning temper is easily wrought upon by the artifices of the earl of Westmoreland, who, I doubt not, means to marry his child to this vile impostor, could his claims be realized—my lord of Warwick persuaded to believe him his grandson.

'I am,' continued she, 'in possession of every paper which can throw any light on a transaction that has almost ceased to be remembered, and is now only thought of to deprive my son of his inheritance: but ere he shall be wrought upon to his own wrong, war, licentious and unrestrained, should waste his land and castles; nay, I would myself destroy the deeds by which he holds them; they are in my power.'

"We left the chapel, and the countess, followed by me, returned to the apartment. 'There is,' said she, 'no time to be lost, my lord; you must instantly prepare for a voyage to Spain; I have pro-

cured

cured from my son leave that I should be his deputy in guarding you; but should another governor be appointed, I shall not know how to excuse your absence; whilst I have the charge, I shall not fear; under pretence that you are sick, we can pretend you keep your chamber, which a domestic of tried fidelity shall regularly attend. I fully rely, you find, on your honour for your speedy return; I have not, Orleans, required an oath for that—(mark, Cicely, the deep art of this wicked woman!)—A ship waits for you at the entrance of the river Severn; its master and crew attend your orders; you must make the port of Seville; execute your just revenge on the vile slave—bear off the lovely prize; with me shall you find a safe asylum.'

'Still,' I cried, 'will the beauteous Neville reject my suit'—Lady Warwick rose, and unlocking a cabinet, drew from it two papers—'Read,' said she, 'this,' presenting

senting me with one; 'it is the confession of a poor creature, seduced, by vast promises of reward, to be a principal tool in this iniquitous affair; but, struck by the terrors of conscience, he has caused this confession to be conveyed to me.' I took the treacherous scroll, which contained many and repeated declarations of penitence; of his being drawn, by the hopes of rewards, to deny the truth; and solemnly declared he was the father of the youth who pretended to be the son of lord Henry Beauchamp and the heiress of Cutherstone. The other paper was also addressed to lord Warwick, beseeching him to pardon him, acknowledging his affection for an ungrateful son had drawn him into an error he repented of; saying that the ill treatment lady Cicely Neville experienced from him had opened his eyes, and that he believed it was principally owing to his artifices she had refused to marry the French noble, with

whom

whom she was violently in love, but whom he had persuaded her to leave; that oft, when the fictitious earl was absent, she would deplore the shades of Elfect she had rashly quitted, and spent her days in tears, oft calling on death to relieve her woes.

"I pressed to my bosom—I wet with my tears the insidious paper which had told me I was beloved. Cicely, yet you pity me not!—alas! loving blindly, madly loving, as I loved, how was it possible I could escape the snares which entangled me? On my knees I write this, dedicating those hours employed by the less miserable to a short oblivion of sorrow, in telling you to what an excess I have loved! how fatally I was deceived! and, ah! to dare to ask you not to hate the miserable Orleans; alas! he dare not ask you to forgive.

'Cicely, I was misled, fatally misled! youthful, ardent in my temper, and lov-

ing

ing you to idolatry, I saw you torn from me by a person I conceived infinitely beneath me. Overcome too by his valour at Agincourt, I burnt with revenge—To be thus doubly foiled!—I was told he boasted of his exploits, that he triumphed over the fallen Orleans. I was told he was the base seducer, by false tales, of the gentle heart which owned me as its lord.

"Thus did the wicked countess work on my unguarded temper—thus did she make me the accursed weapon of her malice.

"I landed at Seville, sought you in Castile, thence I followed to Barcelona—the false, the treacherous Gilbert met me, and confirmed with horrid oaths the account lady Warwick had given me.

"But I cannot relate—you cannot bear the recapitulation of particulars; suffice it to say, Gilbert inflamed me with

added

added rage. Ah! trust me, Cicely, beloved of my soul! I knew not thou wert the wedded wife of the lord Beauchamp.

"I saw you—yes, Cicely, concealed by the traitor Gilbert, I spent a day in an apartment next to yours; could he have wrought on me as he wished, I should have had crimes of a still-deeper dye to have atoned for; but I then comprehended him not, though conviction now flashes on my mind, that at that period when I sought how best to sustain my honour, and gratify my revenge, he would have plunged me into wickedness the most flagrant. Orleans had been a dark assassin.

"Your presence inspired me with fresh hatred of my rival.

"No sooner was the fatal conflict over than all my rage was spent—shocked at the grief you evinced, mad with despair, scarce knowing what road I went, I clapped

clapped my spurs into my steed, nor stopped till the noble animal fell dead beneath me; I found myself not far from that part of the coast where the vessel waited me.

"Returned to England, I flew to lady Warwick, accompanied by her vile accomplice, and hoped to have found her ready to sooth, to alleviate my sufferings, but she received me with contempt—with coldness.

'Where,' she cried, 'is Cicely? where the infant son she bore at the court of Castile?'

"Lady Warwick saw the horror I felt on the sad issue, at the horrid deed my ungoverned rage had prompted me to commit, and saw that I would not be made subservient to her purpose.

"Soothing, with all that blandishment of manner she knew how to practise, my perturbed soul, she reconciled me to myself, representing I fairly opposed my single

single arm to that of an impostor, whose complicated crimes and impositions deserved a death the most base and ignominious; that in the field my life might have been the forfeit instead of his.

"Why need I repeat her arguments, glossed over with a shew of plausibility; or say that she fostered a fond, a delusive hope that still lurked in my bosom?

"I look up—it is once again morning—my head is light—my brain turns round—I go to wander a few minutes beneath your window.

"I sallied forth at the postern-gate; the deer were leaving their coverts; each bird and beast seemed to be shaking off sleep, and preparing for the opening day.

"With unequal steps I brushed off the dew which hung on every blade of grass; the path that led to the hermitage lay before me; I turned up it; I lifted the latch of the door, and meant to enter—there, Cicely, to pour out in prayer

prayer the bitterness of my soul in that hallowed retreat; a sudden faintness fluttered at my heart; a deep, a dying groan seemed to strike my ear; I imagined I saw once more the dying look of——

"Hastily I retraced the road; entering the castle, I heard you had quitted your chamber—you refused to hear me.

"Yes, Cicely, completely is the proud spirit of Orleans subdued! seek not further to humiliate him who bends before your inflexible virtue.

"I cannot bear your hatred, nor will I suffer this load of life many hours—still you refuse to see me.

"Another sun shall not witness my misery; I have seen it rise on the towers of Raby for the last time; no longer has its glorious rays any charms for me—it throws a sickly light across my paper.

"Jaques has been with me; he has been on his knees entreating me to take some refreshment; no, I will not eat, I will

will not drink, beneath the roof of lord Westmoreland—what! shall the base wretch, who stole at midnight into his castle, who dragged with frantic hand his lovely child from the hall of her fathers, who rushed into her presence at the lonely hour of night—what! shall he taste of the hospitable fare of Raby? no, famine shall sooner end his days.

"Why thus weary you with my sufferings!—they draw to an end—a few hours, and then, Cicely, Orleans shall cease to offend—thy pity he dies to purchase!"

Ah, Matilda! whilst I read this, what a sad variety of emotions assailed my heart! oft I had laid it down—oft had the tears dimmed my eyes—but anxious to conclude, I had proceeded.

The duke still slept, and the morning peeping in at the window, I extinguished

ed the light, and opening the casement, inhaled the freshness of the new-born air.

"Ah!" said I, softly, "if it is decreed the duke must die, may his death expiate—!" I stopped—"Cruel, cruel lady Warwick! why have you made it necessary I should"—I could not say at that moment—"hate Orleans?"—but pausing a while, resumed—"the duke of Orleans? Was he not my protector, my preserver, from the malice of lady Douglas? Ah! how vast are my obligations to his memory! then how acquit myself? how repay them? Is it by loading with curses his son, whose noble and generous soul has been drawn in to commit crimes his nature shudders at, whilst feelings that honour the man have been awakened into crimes that would disgrace the monster?"

Again my thoughts wandered; a multitude of confused images chased each

other

other through my brain; I no longer could accuse the prince as the sole author of my misery; and I remembered not his crimes as I thought of lady Warwick's treachery.

Ah Matilda!—how weak—how frail are our natures! The narrative of the prince, which I had spurned with horror from me—which I had shuddered as I opened, I now pressed to my lips, then recollecting myself, blushed at my weakness.

I found myself kneeling, as it were involuntarily, by the duke's bed, with the packet grasped in my hand, and pouring out ardent prayers for his recovery; during the time I had stood at the window he had awoke, yet not speaking, I was not conscious but he still slept, till roused from my devotions, by his saying in a weak voice—"Do I live? am I yet on earth, or do I dream? or have I cast off the load of mortality and am really

in heaven?—Oh! I imagined I was really there, that lord Beauchamp bid me be comforted! I felt comforted; he bade me, to thee, Cicely, dispense comfort—tell her to submit to a destiny she cannot avoid, with patience.

'The fatal curse of D'Aranjeus must pursue the offspring of Theresa, nor let her repine at the means.'—More did he say ere I awaked.

"Ah Cicely! has he said, pity became that gentle bosom; did he say, the ill-fated Orleans, as he did to me, was but an instrument in the hand of Providence, to fulfil its decrees, which are deep and unsearchable;—I die contented, at last you pity."—Life seemed fled as he spoke.

I called Jaques, but ere he came the prince again breathed Father Francis entered; I retired to visit Agnes Douglas; she required much consolation, and all my attention had been directed to the duke; I had told her, monsieur Bidet

lay

lay in the castle, at the point of death, and the gentle girl, even amidst all her own sorrows, had a tear to give to his sufferings; whilst I was with her, my thoughts perpetually wandered to the sick chamber of the prince, and scarce had I spirits to attempt at cheering the fair Agnes.

At the door of the duke's apartment I met the good father, who informed me, he hoped every thing for his patient, yet his extreme weakness required great caution—"You had best not enter, lady," he said.

"Nay, my friend, refuse me not that," and I entered.

The duke was sitting supported by cushions, but so wan, so weak, so helpless;—ah Matilda! when raving and delirious, he wildly called on my name, I felt not so affected;—advancing to him, I reached out my hand and burst into tears.

 "Weep

"Weep you, lady, for me?—alas! I know you ought not to bestow tears on the unworthy!

"Yet, for me have you charitably obtained succour, for me did you wake and watch;—yes, Cicely was the nurse of the frenzied Orleans."

"Talk not thus," I replied, "my lord, but compose yourself."

He laid his hand on mine; the faint fluttering of his pulse declared those emotions were more than he could bear. Father Francis said—"Either, my lord, restrain those agitations, or lady Cicely no more shall enter this chamber."

"Only," cried the prince, "let me assure her of my gratitude—only, my good father, allow me to say to the lovely——"

"Hush! hush!" interrupted the father; "come, lady, this must not be."

"Nay, I beseech, I conjure you!" said Orleans—"if I am not to see her, I must die;—no longer will I bear the burden

of

of life—it is alone by seeing, by hearing her, that I shall be enabled to act up to what I propose; I will not abuse the confidence she places in me, nor talk of Bidet, neither will I say I have loved."

Father Francis beckoning me, I rose—"Adieu!" I said; "soon, my lord, I shall again visit you." He seized my hand with violence, he pressed it to his lips, and his extreme agitation unsettled again his senses; he clasped me with a sort of convulsive tightness—he attempted to rise; this his extreme weakness forbade; with difficulty could I free myself, whilst he wildly conjured me by every thing sacred not to leave him.

I resolved not to visit again the prince, whose recovery was rapid; youth and strength of constitution prevailed over disease and weakness; in a few days he was enabled to be removed to the next apartment for air.

Meanwhile, I dedicated my time to

the gentle Agnes. We received a letter from my brother, which informed us lady Douglas still lived, and that she ardently wished to behold her daughter ere she died, that she might bestow her hand on lord Henry, who joined lady Douglas in begging she would immediately set out.

The lovely Scot prepared to obey, and I attended her to Newcastle, from whence she proceeded on her journey, accompanied by an attendant of lady Douglas, and an ancient gentlewoman belonging to her household, with a guard strong enough to protect her from the savage borderers; lord Henry was to meet her at the castle of Wark.

When I returned to Raby, I had the satisfaction to learn, the duke had been out in the court to enjoy the benefit of the air.

Since the night I had watched in the chamber of the prince, I had suffered the manuscript he had given me to remain locked

locked up in my cabinet, though not unthought of.

It had estranged my mind from its usual train of thinking; I felt a degree of pity for its author, which I blushed at the idea of, which I was unwilling to own, although my thoughts were bent with a degree of anxiety, dangerous to my repose, on the recovery of the duke.

No longer could I perform my so late regular and accustomed devotions at the monument of lord Beauchamp, and I wandered from one apartment of the castle to another, without allaying the perturbation of my mind; I now meditated leaving the care of the prince and Raby to father Francis and Jaques, by whom I received several messages, requesting I would allow the duke to visit me. I endeavoured to evade a request, which I foresaw would not contribute to my ease.

Orleans then entreated I would suffer

him to write to me.—"Ah! no, no, Jaques," I replied, "urge me not to a step I cannot approve! nor can I any longer stay at Raby, and yet refuse every wish of the ill-fated prince—alas, my faithful friend! it is a conflict Cicely wants fortitude to sustain; to-morrow shall I go to Witton, where, in the converse of lady Eure, I shall try to lose my sense of remembering what is painful. When I can behold the prince, and look on him only as the son of your noble master—when I can cease to remember he has loved me—and, ah! when I can cease also to remember the misery he has caused, then gladly will I offer him my friendship, which, ere this, he has refused.

"But speak, how shall I erase from the tablet of my memory what is so deeply engraven? know you not I have a son? tell me, ought I not to hate Orleans? staying here, I shall forget all,

every-

every thing which a mother—yes, the mother of an orphan, should feel."

The venerable servant of the house of Orleans turned aside to wipe the tear that rolled down his cheek.

"I beseech you, lady, on my bended knees, talk not thus!—ah! break not my heart!—alas! you know not the sufferings of the duke, you know not his penitence; carry not your resentment thus far; think, had he you lament returned to his native land, would the accursed lady Warwick have suffered him to live, desolation and war would have followed.

"Oh! think, lady, with pity, on the prince, who loved you with the enthusiasm of which his ardent soul is capable! suspected not the false tale which flattered his hopes; reflect on his temper—open, generous, and unguarded. Ah! too easily did he suffer himself to be wrought upon by the wicked arts of the countess!

"Ah! what crime can there be in see-

ing him—in saying you pity, when he no longer asks for your love—no longer sues for forgiveness—and wishes but to know you repent not those tears you shed the first day of his recovery?"

No longer able to conceal my agitation, I left the apartment abruptly, and retiring to my chamber, threw myself on a seat, where I gave way to emotions that could not be restrained. No, thought I again, the duke shall not witness my weakness—yes, I will refuse him an interview, which perhaps would assure him I also require pity—I will not trust myself. Yet it is necessary, ere I quit Raby, to read the remainder of the manuscript, which shall be returned to the duke; it would but for ever remind me of his misfortunes, of his love; weeping over the tale, I should forget his crimes; oh! I should forget—I should cease to remember what I am—no longer respect myself!—yes, Matilda, already had I forgot

got myself, as I thought of the prince, pale and emaciated, sinking perhaps to an early grave.

Heedless what I was doing, instead of taking the narrative, I took up the deed the prince had given me with it; opening it, I saw my mistake, and beheld that every thing in his power to bestow he had by that deed given to me, provided I caused to be built and endowed a chapel in Spain, in France, and in England, where masses should be constantly performed for the souls of lord Beauchamp, the duke, and his father. He left the fixing the place to me, but mentioned Tinmouth, Bidet, and Barcelona—"There," said he, "have I much need of the prayers of the righteous." He begged to be interred with his father, and added a wish that the fatal scarf of Bidet might be buried with him.

Overcome by this proof of affection, I scarce could summon courage to finish

the recital; yet opening it, I began where I had left off, and found it continued as follows:—

"So artfully had lady Warwick managed, that my absence was unknown—another governor was appointed; yet by the infamous Gilbert I oft received tokens of what I judged her friendship. I learnt the death of the earl of Warwick, and that lord Richard had succeeded without any opposition from your family.

"Lady Warwick found also means to inform me of your return to Raby; that you had suffered shipwreck and many distresses, but that your only companion who survived was an aged servant to a French gentleman who had perished on the shores of Tinmouth, where you had caused him to be entombed.

"Good Heavens, Cicely! was it possible

ble I could form a conjecture, that he whom I was told you so deeply lamented was my father—that Louis de Valois, duke of Orleans, had outlived his assassination? Overcome by the strictness of the confinement I now experienced, together with the violence of my passions, of my various feelings, I fell sick.

"By large rewards and bountiful promises, lady Warwick prevailed on the person employed by the noble who had charge to attend and guard me, to allow her to take the care of me for a certain time.

"I attended lady Warwick in disguise into Worcestershire, where I freely ranged over the adjoining grounds, and cheered by her converse, quickly regained my wonted health and strength.

"The countess proposed my accompanying her into the North. Arrived at the stately castle of the Beauchamps, on the

the banks of the river Tees, what were my emotions at hearing you were at Raby, only a few miles distant! Lady Warwick saw, yet did not seem to observe these emotions, and I spent several days in the splendid apartments of the castle, which overhung the rapid waters of the Tees, unheeding the wild and romantic scenery which surrounded it; lost in profound reverie, I was sitting, with my head leaning on the window, when looking up I saw the countess enter.

'Prince,' said she, 'still do you love lady Cicely?'

"I arose.—'Why, lady Warwick,' said I, 'that question? Ah! could you know the passion that fills this heart, which mocks all expression, that wastes my strength in conflicts which have racked my soul almost to madness, that has tortured me with jealousy—with every agonizing passion—I can bear it no longer;

ger;—ah! why did you bring me to the castle of Barnard?—ah! why, lady, said you, *Do you still love Cicely?*'

"She held out a letter—'Know you, my lord,' said she, 'those characters?'—Snatching it from her, I almost devoured it with ardent kisses.

'Nay, you will destroy it,' she cried; 'read and compose yourself.'

"With the first command I eagerly complied, but the last, Cicely, was impossible. The letter was addressed to lady Jane Neville, the writing was so exactly yours, alas! how could I but be deceived. This token, so unhoped for, flattered my wishes; for it contained expressions which plainly said, lady Jane was the confidant of your passion for the enraptured Orleans: those were the concluding words—'Pity, then, my dear sister, your Cicely! no longer does the duke of Orleans love me—he deserts

me;

me; true, I knew at first the earl my father would not seem to give consent to an union which, although above his hopes in point of consequence, yet, if unsanctioned by Henry, might afford his enemies a pretext to ruin him:—nay, such is the cruel restraint I must myself lay under, that I must appear, was he ever to say he loved, to reject him. But, alas! no more will these eyes behold him! Happy, happy shades of Bidet! then did he love! Why did I not then avow my mutual passion? ah! why did I foolishly listen to tales which drew me from the banks of the Loire? ah! did Orleans love as he did there, he would not have regarded opposition, he would have surmounted every obstacle, he would have taken me from Raby:—soon will it be too late; the earl still talks of a convent—ah my sister! with a heart consumed by passion, how shall I take the sacred oaths!'

'What!'

'What!' I exclaimed, 'shall Cicely suspect my love!—no, this moment will I fly to Raby—I will throw myself at her feet.'

'Cease, Orleans,' cried the wicked countess, 'those raptures! To behold her is not easy, nor will she appear to consent to accompany you;—true, the time is favourable, for the guard left by lord Westmoreland has marched this morning for the borders, headed by the lord Henry Neville.'

"Lady Warwick's residence at Barnard Castle was not known, as we came both disguised, only attended by Gilbert, who was my escort in my first endeavour; but Providence was your guard; miraculously were you preserved. Ah! had lady Warwick ever had you in her power, what could have preserved you from her rage? She found means to procure me a key which opened the postern-gate; she gave me a straight direction to your

your chamber; happily you were not there, but your woman I found slept near.

"Gilbert, in disguise, sold to your domestics baked sweetmeats, in which was a drug infused, whose potent power lulled to sleep whoever ate of them; by his means was the subterranean passage also discovered; need I repeat circumstances so painful, recal to your recollection my behaviour? need I also say, that, so strangely deceived, so madly infatuated by the artifice of lady Warwick, by my own passions, I imagined it was but an affectation of resentment you displayed? and hoped, when I had you, as lady Warwick proposed, at her castle in Worcestershire, you would enjoy with me all the pleasures resulting from a love the most ardent?

"Already do you guess it was Gilbert who fled at the approach of the faithful Jaques.—Ah! how was I shocked, how humbled,

humbled, whilst I read the last charge of my father! Unused to control, I had not seen the toils so artfully drawn round me, till I had plunged into crimes of the deepest dye.—Oh! is there, in the bosom of mercy, pardon for me?—alas! I dare not ask it of Heaven.

'You deny it—yes, ever deny the penitent, the miserable Orleans an interview; in vain he wished to inform you of the arts of lady Warwick; only wished to confess to you his share of guilt. If you will not hear me, I will not bear this insupportable load of misery.

"The evening draws on, again will I attempt to see you—again will you refuse. Oh Cicely! when dead at your feet, will you then sigh, as you look on the breathless clay, and say, the blood of Orleans expiates his guilt?

"Yet one more caution—Ah Cicely! your child, the child of lord Beauchamp, is it safe from lady Warwick's malice?—mother and child are equally objects of

her

her hatred;—Catalina is dead—who then is the helpless infant's protector?—It is done—Orleans has nothing more to do with life; yet will he say—Remember the faithful follower of my father. But to that gentle heart the request is needless."

What a train of evils had the last caution the duke had given me conjured up to my view! the reflection harrowed up my soul; why was my father now far distant? what although resolved to drop all pretensions to the estates of Warwick, yet might not the heirs of D'Aranjeus entertain designs similar to lady Warwick?—was my poor child's life safe in the castle? The idea of his danger swallowed up every other, and scarce could I give orders for my departure the next morning.

I began almost to wish what my heart had so steadfastly avoided; yet how could I admit the duke to my presence,

after

after having in so peremptory a manner refused his entreaties?—yet was it not my duty? might he not be able to inform me further of my enemy's designs?

I spent a night sleepless and agitated, and arose unrefreshed.—Already at the gate stood the retinue which was to attend me to Witton Castle, yet, irresolute, I could not prepare for my journey.

The day was yet early, and my attendants were informed that I should not leave Raby till noon.

I had not been at the cell of lord Beauchamp since forcibly carried thither by the duke; thither then I resolved to go ere I went to lady Eure, yet found a kind of secret dread at the idea of entering it.

The news of my departure had reached the prince, and he sent Jaques to acquaint me he proposed that day to quit Raby.

"Why,"

"Why," exclaimed I, eagerly, "has he formed this resolution?"

"Need you," replied Jaques, "lady, ask?—think you, can my lord bear to drive you from home?—he is conscious you go to Witton to avoid him."

"Is the duke able to undertake a journey?" rejoined I.

"Alas! no, my lady! did you see him, quickly would you know how unequal he is to the slightest fatigue; but has not my unhappy lord convinced you his life for you was a willing sacrifice?"

"Ah! whither shall he go?—tell him, my friend, 'tis Cicely who commands his stay—say I conjure, I entreat him, not to leave Raby; what! shall I drive forth to despair the son of my generous preserver?"

"Then, lady, abandon him not to despair, quit not the castle! must the ill-starred prince drive you from the seat of your fathers, to seek elsewhere protection?

tion? never, if you go, will he consent to remain; weak as he is, already he prepares for his journey."

"Does he go, then, to the treacherous lady Warwick? is his journey only to the castle of Barnard?—Then let him go."

"No, lady, think not the duke will again put himself in her power; in disguise he means to wander whence the countess took him; she has heard of the ill success of her infernal schemes, and has left the North with Gilbert, but whither they are gone I know not."

"Did he not say, Jaques, he wished to see me?"

"Certain, lady, of his request being refused, he mourns in secret your disdain; but no longer, even to me, calls you cruel or inexorable; yet may I not hope, lady, you now relent?"

"Stop," I cried hastily, "Jaques! stay, my venerable friend, nor ask what, in

pity

pity to the prince—what, in justice to myself, I ought to refuse; allow me time to recollect my scattered spirits."

I gasped, as if for want of breath. Jaques seemed alarmed—"You look pale, lady; are you well?"

"Yes," I replied, "but leave me; two hours hence I will again see you."

Wrapping my mantle round me, with trembling steps and palpitating heart, I walked along, unmindful of my road, till looking round, I perceived myself in the very spot where the unhappy prince had so nearly terminated his existence, where I had spent a night which even now I cannot think of without horror. I started; the blood which had flowed from his wound still stained the grass, though over it had fallen (and partly concealed) the leaves of a spreading sycamore which shaded the north side of this retreat. It was one of those clear frosty days, in the latter end of autumn, which cheer the

heart

heart of the peasant, as he gathers the last scanty remnant of harvest. The sun shone with cheerful rays through the trees, half despoiled of their foliage; and as I threw myself on the seat, I frightened two redbreasts who were paying a grateful tribute to its beams—"Well," I cried, "may you shun the ill-fated Cicely! came you here, sweet birds, to cover with leaves the blood of Orleans? it cries aloud to Heaven for vengeance on my devoted head.—Ah! why am I not permitted to seek the same holy asylum my sister found, and there, by prayer and penance, expiate my crime, my unconscious crime. Ah! why, my father, did you leave me? why did I ever know the duke? why did I ever know he was less guilty?" Then casting my eyes on the grass, I felt chilled at the sight, and threw my mantle over my eyes. "I must," said I, "go to the cell; there will I recall my wandering

senses; I will there resolve either to see the duke, or think of him no more—alas! how shall I meet him? how support myself with that chilling coldness prudence and widowed modesty demand?

"At Bidet, gay, haughty, arrogant, owning my influence, he laughed at the power which subdued him; now he sues, with a dejected air and woe-struck soul, but for my pity:—at Bidet did I fail to admire his gallant carriage—he seemed born to command—his noble, his insinuating manners—ah! there, had my heart not owned a passion, which had grown with me from childhood, could I have refused; yet there I did—yes, though it would have given peace to my country, safety to my friends.

"How wayward is my nature!—in vain do I strive! for ever does my fancy represent the bleeding form of the prince, or view him pale, helpless, and dying.

"Why

"Why do I feel thus strangely? why does his voice for ever sound in my ears? why am I mocked with airy visions of comfort, never to be realized? why do I thus forget myself? No, no, I must not see him; Jaques shall bear my last, my final resolve; I will go directly to Witton; alas! I dare not trust myself! Orleans, never, never again will I behold you—fate, cruel and inexorable, divides us for ever."

A rustling amongst the fallen leaves and a deep sigh alarmed me; the place I was in contributed, together with the subject which engrossed my thoughts, and which I had audibly given utterance to, farther to distress me. Slowly, and as if afraid to look up, I withdrew my mantle; my eyes fell on the duke of Orleans, whom with his head sunk on his bosom, as if afraid to behold me, knelt at my feet.—"Go," said he, "Cicely; I meant not to detain you."

I was rising, but sunk again on the seat.

Fear seemed to give new strength to the prince; he arose, and supporting me, cried—"Adored of my soul! think not this intrusion meditated, or that basely Orleans would presume on what the generous heart of Cicely has dictated; no, he will try patiently to endure his wretchedness, nor by fresh crimes add to miseries which have sunk his soul to despair. Ere I quitted Raby, I wished, at the cell of lord Beauchamp, to implore mercy—my strength was unequal to my intention, and I threw myself down at the back of this retreat, concealed, I imagined, from every eye, and from the chance of offending your injured sight. Yet here your steps were also directed; afraid of alarming you, I stirred not; you covered your face with your mantle; I stole round unseen to take a last look—I was fascinated; I dropped instinctively before you.

you. But I will no longer intrude—adieu, adieu for ever! Oh Cicely! if again restored to liberty—if again I visit my native land, I shall evince to you I have a soul which respects that virtue it cannot reach. Oh! only say adieu, and on that single word comfort shall exist—the only comfort that can ever enter the breast of Orleans."

He rose to go; he was already retiring; bursting into tears, I cried—"Nay, leave me not thus, my lord! 'tis Cicely who now asks you to stay, and yet 'tis only because she knows not how to bid you fly her."

Again I saw the duke at my feet; he took the hand I had stretched out to him between his, and with his eyes (in which his very soul seemed transfused) fixed on my face, he remained without speech; yet on his expressive countenance was pictured the various emotions of his heart—pity for me, remorse and shame for his

 past

past conduct, these were alternately chased by a fond, a delusive hope, that what he had so recently witnessed had given birth to.

Withdrawing my hand—" Rise, my lord," I cried; " this must not be; yet stay, ah! refuse not to stay at Raby, till you are able to travel! must the miserable Cicely ever be the bane of those dear——" I sighed and stopped; my ideas were recalled by a sudden flash of joy that danced across the face of the duke.

I felt the impropriety of my situation, and with cheeks suffused with blushes, endeavoured to rise, but he had again taken hold of my hand, and detaining me—" If indeed you do not hate me, hear this request—depart not from Raby! let not Orleans, the prisoner of your countrymen, drive from the seat of her ancestors the fair daughter of Westmoreland; allow me, if necessary, to go;

of

of what consequence is a life useless to my country, a burthen to myself?"

"Talk not thus," I replied, "my lord; you shall, you must yield; shall your death swell the list of those whose lives have been sacrificed for me?" (the prince sighed deeply) "shall the fame, the spotless fame of the daughter of Raby be sullied by the rude breath of calumny? Lady Warwick will not scruple to assert that the duke of Orleans escaped from his guards, fled to Cicely, who gladly received him."

"No, no, Cicely, wicked as she is, she will not dare asperse the name of her she hates; no, she dare not give breath to suggestions which justly she might fear would irritate me boldly to proclaim her arts—her hellish machinations, though bound by a solemn oath not to reveal them.

"In the cause of virtue I will be bold

 —yes,

—yes, Cicely, to gain your esteem, to merit your friendship, I will do more even than to obtain your love; I will for this impose on myself a task the hardest possible to sustain—for ever banished your presence, no longer will I seek to hear of you—my days shall be spent in prayers for your happiness, in defeating the designs of your enemies; dissembling my just resentment, I will not discover to lady Warwick what lies heavy here at my heart; my friendship, my unwearied solicitude for your interest, may in some measure counterbalance that misery I have been the wretched cause of—I ask but that you will not quit Raby."

The prince talked of friendship with too empassioned an air to make me suppose his effort to serve me would proceed solely from that motive. "Orleans," said I, "let us separate; I will

not

not quit Raby whilst you stay, provided you see me no more—the very instant you make the attempt, I leave it."

Again he urged reasons for his going—again I objected, and insisted on his complying with the conditions proposed.

I had marked the successive changes the complexion of the prince had undergone, from an ashy paleness to a suffusion of the deepest scarlet; fearful his agitations might have a fatal effect on his weak state, I was beginning to urge his immediate return to the castle, when springing from his seat, he extended himself along the ground. "Behold," he franticly cried, "Cicely, those sanguine stains; still do they bear evidence that here I was reduced to despair; again are those sad shades witness to my misery, again they behold Orleans refused, by her he fondly dotes on, the most innocent wish of his soul. Do you hold it possible that I can live under the same

roof with you, yet not at least endeavour to behold you?—do you imagine I could keep the promise you so calmly ask me to make?—I cannot do it. Banish me—I go without daring to repine; then at a distance, I will not ask even to hear of you; but to be so near, yet not permitted to behold you!—seek not to impose such hard conditions."

Bursting into tears—"Orleans," I said, "why thus distress me? did you view my heart, rent as it is by a thousand contrary emotions, then would you know it would suit better your professions of friendship to sooth, than thus to wound and terrify me."

My distress, my accent, moved the duke; rising, he bathed my hand with his tears.

Yes, Matilda, the once gay, volatile prince wept; softened by misfortune, and yielding to a passion which seemed but to increase by difficulties, his soul melted,

and

and the tears of Orleans were mingled with those of Cicely.

Subdued, overcome by this scene, I was no longer mistress of myself; I had thrown my arms round the duke, his head was laid on my lap, his hands lightly clasped round my waist. "Let this, then, my lord," I sobbed out, "be a last adieu; alas! to what do I expose myself! perhaps to your contempt as well as my own—yes, you will despise my weakness."

"Despise you, Cicely! never, never can I think of you but with esteem—but with admiration—never behold you but with love which borders on idolatry."

"Leave me, my lord! I conjure you to leave me!" (I attempted to rise, but could not)—"fate for ever divides us—let us submit to its decrees."

"Teach me," said the duke, "to bear this inexorable decree; inspired by you, what cannot I accomplish! But let my

mind regain its tranquillity by beholding you; 'tis you alone that can make yourself obeyed. By seeing, by conversing with you, shall my mind recover its lost power; the jarring passions of Orleans' soul shall be hushed into peace by the soft voice of Cicely; nor does he ask you to see him but in the presence of the good father Francis, or the faithful Jaques."

A rustling behind us alarmed me; we both rose; it was an unnecessary alarm, for no one seemed near; again was I seated, the duke by me; it was requisite to stay till he had recovered a little from his extreme agitation.

Ere we rose I had agreed to stay at Raby, and to allow the duke to converse with me, at stated times, in the presence of father Francis or Jaques.

How was I astonished, on entering the castle, to learn the earl of Westmoreland had been there during my absence, and again

again had quitted it! he confirmed the report, Jaques said, which had already reached us, of the murder of John duke of Burgundy, during a conference he held with the dauphin Charles on the bridge of Montereau sur Yonne. This seemed evidently to distress the prince.

"Unhappy country!" he exclaimed, "when shall thy miseries cease!

"Witness, ye blessed saints! I am guiltless of this foul, this fatal deed.

"Frenchmen, impute not this murder to me—no, my father, at your last solemn commands I abjured all further idea of revenge; yet the revenge I sought was open—was avowed—was honour able;—I sought not, Burgundy, for thy blood by base assassination—I would have met thee in the field, my single arm to thine—in vain did I plead for justice on the murderers of my father—on his dark assassins."

Father Francis accompanying me to my apartment, informed me the earl had left

left his retinue, and come almost unattended to Raby to visit me, that I had been sought in vain, and the business of the earl was so urgent, he could not stay till I was found, he being obliged to be at Durham against a certain hour.

"Asked not my father for lord Henry?" I said.

"Yes, but I answered he was from home, and no further inquiries were made."

My brother had, by the sage advice of sir Robert Ogle and sir John Neville, kept secret from the earl his love for Agnes Douglas.

"Whither," I cried, "goes the earl from Durham?"

"To the court of Scotland, privately (he in confidence has told me) to treat of the ransom of the Scottish king, one condition of which is a marriage between James and some lady descended from the royal house of Lancaster."

"It will then, I hope, be my charming cousin,

cousin, Jane of Somerset; long he has sighed for her."

"The earl was accompanied by the countess your mother," said my venerable friend, "to a seat of the earl of Northumberland's, in Yorkshire, where your sister Eleanor is on a visit.

"The apartments of the castle are ordered to be ready to receive the countesses and their retinue in the space of a fortnight."

During that time, chiefly in the presence of father Francis, though sometimes of Jaques, I had many conversations with the duke; yet those interviews, so eagerly sought for, seemed to afford him little satisfaction; his manner was embarrassed, and I no longer heard the elegant recitals, or the lively sallies of wit, with which he was wont, in the castle of Bidet, to beguile my woes and enchain my attention.

Once or twice he attempted to talk to me

me of friendship, but on this topic I warned him to desist, as, from his glow of colouring, it partook of that passion which he had promised to confine to his own bosom.

Although our conversations were languid and without interest, yet the duke always appeared to depart unwillingly, never quitting me till reminded of the length of his stay. He was now able to travel, and the time had already elapsed when the countess was expected. By various means he had delayed his journey, but it was now requisite he should defer it no longer.

One evening only intervened; I wished to have avoided bidding him adieu, but the good father, Jaques, all entreated, and I saw the prince.

Already do you know his ardent temper; he talked not of friendship, but as a secondary passion; it was meant as a last, as a final adieu; yet did I not, Matilda,

so

so far forget myself as to make him solemnly promise never to come where he could see me, unless ordered by the king, requested by my father, or sent for by me; yet I asked not for the scarf of Bidet, which he had almost promised to relinquish at his departure from Raby that day my father was there; nor did I, as I intended, remember to return to him the manuscript he gave me the fatal evening beneath the yew-tree.

Jaques was to accompany the prince, father Francis saying, the earl of Westmoreland would easily procure this addition to his small retinue from the king.

The duke was to wear the badge of the house of Neville, thus passing as a courier charged with dispatches of importance, whilst Jaques appeared (as he scarce spoke any English) as a prisoner to the earl, whom the courier was conveying to a place of confinement.

I retired

I retired early, yet at the hour of their departure sleep had not visited my eye-lids. I arose; Jaques being to take leave in the morning, I gave him repeated, yet unnecessary charges respecting his care of his master, and bestowed on him presents of considerable value: these were valued by him far beyond their worth, as given by me in remembrance of my friendship—"When you want," I said, "my ever-esteeemed Jaques, an asylum, seek it but with me, whose obligations are unbounded."

He was preparing to withdraw, when he pulled somewhat from his bosom, saying—"Accept, lady Cicely, my master conjures you, this ring: secure, though you now appear, from all the malice of fortune; guarded by alliances, rich, brave, and powerful; yet even you may hereafter want an arm to wield a sword in your defence; whilst Orleans breathes, tell Cicely, tell *his* Cicely, he has sacredly vowed

vowed to breathe only as her champion; send—should ever adverse fate require it, send but this token, the duke flies to defend you—nor seas shall prevent, nor mountains impede him."

I gave him my hand; kneeling, he put on the ring, and withdrew; scarce was he gone when I heard the sound of the horses' feet, as they passed along the drawbridge.

It was dawn of day, yet I went not to the window to see them depart. I recalled to my mind the time the duke finally left me at Bidet, when, mounting the battlements, I descended not till no longer I perceived his retinue.

I had now leisure to reflect on my imprudence in accepting the pledge of amity which sparkled on my finger; a tear, as it fell, dimmed its lustre—I pulled it off, and deposited this pledge in my cabinet, resolved to find some method of returning it. The domestics of

the

the castle, though knowing Monsieur Bidet and Jaques were to depart that day, yet saw not their disguises, knew not which road they went, and, of course, I could not send after them.

Next day arrived the two countesses with their splendid retinues; again I received the maternal benediction—again was I clasped to the heart of my beloved Eleanor, who presented to me her two lovely infants; in their countenances already I thought I could trace all the heroism, all the virtue of their race.

Ah Matilda! those children so promising of every thing a fond mother could wish! so near the age of my own!—think you, my dear friend, I failed to mingle tears with my caresses? Eleanor was alarmed; she knew not the sad, the hidden cause which I had promised the earl solemnly not to reveal:—ah my sister! you knew not the sight of your engaging infants embittered all the joy I felt at beholding

holding you, in conversing with, and retracing each favourite haunt of our childhood!—ah! how oft, unknowingly, did you strike daggers to my heart, as you talked of our companions!

Christmas was to be kept at Warkworth Castle with great splendour; already was the earl of Northumberland there; I attended my mother and sister thither, where the earl of Westmoreland was, together with sir John, his eldest son, to meet us on their return from Scotland; the better half of the sons and daughters of the earl of Westmoreland were to be present on this occasion, and amongst them were expected my brother Henry and his fair bride.

Nought was heard at Warkworth but sounds of joy and festivity; the gates of the castle were thrown open to all comers, and its lofty halls resounded to the songs of the minstrels, whose verses recounted the heroic deeds of the Percys; nor

nor were the Nevilles forgotten;—side by side, oft had they encountered the fierce Scots, as, raging for plunder, they were overthrowing alike the proud towers and the humble cottages. Lord Henry and his bride had not yet arrived; it was the eve of Christmas; an oak, despoiled of its branches, blazed in the chimney of the great hall; its cheerful light diffused pleasure on every face.

The swollen pipes summoned the tenantry to dance; they ceased, and the minstrels resumed their strains; they sung the bloody battle of Homeldon, when the Scots were defeated, and the Percys triumphant led their nobles in chains.

A page entering, knelt to lady Percy, and informed her lord Henry Neville and his bride stood without; I accompanied the earl and countess of Westmoreland and Eleanor to receive them; Agnes, kneeling to the parents of her husband, received what she asked—the parental

parental benediction; lady Percy seemed charmed by the manner of the fair Scot; attracted to each other by similarity of character, a friendship, strong as instantaneous, took place between them.

Agnes, much fatigued, retired to her chamber, when my brother informed us that lady Douglas, enraged at the flight of her daughter, determined on revenge, feigned a sickness, which deceived lord Henry so far as to send for Agnes; nor doubted he of receiving her hand, accompanied by a mother's blessing; for lady Douglas had made it an article in her pardon and consent, that their hands were to be united in her presence; but when they met at Warkworth, sir Robert Ogle discovered it only a stratagem to get them both in her power, and insisted on the immediate solemnization of their nuptials, unless they wished never more to see each other; they complied, joyfully complied. Acquainting lady Dou-

glas with their marriage, at first she chided, but soon appeared reconciled, and made them some valuable presents; her health seemed to be reinstated, and she gave them, when solicited, leave to meet the earl and countess at Warkworth, on condition they were again to return to her; lord Henry to make Scotland his country, as he would, by marrying so rich an heiress, have lands which he was bound to reside on and protect. Meanwhile lord Westmoreland was informed of his son's marriage, and that, early in the summer, lady Douglas would meet him and his son, the warden of the western marches, at Lochmaberstone; or if he sent a retinue to conduct her, she would even come as far as his house at Newcastle on the Tyne; or, should he require it, to the castle of Brancepeth or Raby, when she hoped those differences, which had subsisted ever since the death of sir Alexander her brother, would be adjusted,

adjusted, and that the fortune she had in her power to bestow on her child, besides her large inheritance, would finally assure the house of Neville she was sincere.

Deceived by her artifice, every suspicion lulled to sleep, the unwary couple had fallen victims to her plots, had they not been revealed to Agnes by one of her chief confidants.

Lady Douglas was to allow them to set out, when, at the very instant, a message was to arrive as if from Warkworth, saying that lord Henry might leave his bride with her mother, and proceed without delay to Raby, whither the earl of Westmoreland was gone, and would wait his arrival; as the king, having been informed of his ardour in marching to the borders, had commanded the earl, on his allegiance, to send the youthful hero to France, where his courage might find sufficient room for exertion.

 This,

This, lady Douglas knew, would have roused a less-active spirit than my brother's, whom having decoyed to a distance, she meant to put Agnes into a nunnery, forcing her to take the veil, or if she refused, to imprison her for life in a distant isle of the Hebrides, where stood a gloomy tower, inhabited by some creatures of her power. Apprehensive of their escape, under pretence of affection, lady Douglas, during the day, never lost sight of her daughter, and at night the castle was strongly watched and barricaded, and admitted not of hope. Anxiety preyed on the bosom of the gentle Agnes, and brought on a disorder which confined her to her bed. The time arrived which was fixed for their departure. Agnes found herself able to undertake the journey, yet still pretending sickness, kept her chamber. The mock messenger arrived from Warkworth; lord Henry, apparently delighted by the proposal he

brought,

brought, took leave of lady Douglas, with many charges regarding his spouse.

On the English borders he collected a few stout fellows, who, allured by his bounty, lay with him in ambush near the road by which lady Douglas meant to send her child.

Agnes was told she was to follow her lord, if able; aware of her mother's plots, and in full confidence of her lord's valour and conduct defeating the deep-laid scheme, she obeyed; her attendants were but few, nor had they orders for resistance; my brother's party overpowered them, and the fair Scot fled with her husband to Warkworth.

Joy for her almost unlooked-for escape, and the kind attentions of her noble hostess, seemed to banish from the bosom of the gentle Agnes the grief she felt from the cruel treatment of her mother; yet often I observed, as the countess of West-

moreland addressed her, a tear glistening in her lovely eyes.

It was some time (so various were the diversions at Warkworth) ere I could obtain a private conference with my father, who informed me, my child, still in the palace of don Juan, received all the attention bestowed on him by Catalina; strong, handsome, and active, he promised to inherit, with the titles and lands of D'Aranjeus, the fine features and graceful limbs of the family.

I wept over the earl's recital, and imagined I beheld my child's helpless infancy exposed to the malice of lady Warwick—to the intrigues of the Spanish kinsman of D'Aranjeus—"Ah," cried I, "my father! why am I thus cruelly debarred from watching over that beloved infant? shall he never taste the caresses of a fond mother? Alas! he has no other parent! only allow me to go to Castile; in

in England I will not assert his rights; the earl of Warwick shall enjoy undisputed his title—his vast wealth, the just right of my infant son."

"Cicely," replied the earl, "distress not yourself thus, nor talk of encountering dangers to which your sex is unequal."

"Ah, my father!" I exclaimed, "what dare not a mother sustain? from what danger shall she shrink?"

"And is there not also," he rejoined, "a duty equally binding—the duty of a child to a parent? wilt thou leave the old age of a father, whose chief hope thou art, and bring his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave?—again listen to me." And the earl recounted severally all the reasons he had formerly given in regard to the secresy he wished to be kept regarding my child; adding also, that the false traitor Gilbert, now being

with lady Warwick, was another reason why the earl could never be brought to believe what was to invalidate his title. My father, ere we parted, informed me that the king had proposed to him my marrying James of Scotland, who still was detained a prisoner. James had, some time before, declared his love for Joan, daughter of the duke of Somerset, my mother's brother.

" Henry," said my father, " obliged to relinquish the idea he once entertained, of sharing with you his throne, policy making him solicit the hand of Katherine of France, was yet resolved you should be a queen, and hitherto had refused all the offers of James in regard to the lady Jane, determining, if you consented to the match, that no other choice should interpose to prevent it. I called at Raby," he continued, " to talk with you on the subject—I saw you not."

" Ah!

"Ah! why," I interrupted, "am I, my father, thus to be sacrificed to rank?"

"Distress not yourself, my child; reasons, which hereafter may be disclosed, have finally determined me to change my opinion."

"But could you have wished me, my lord," I rejoined, "to have divided hearts already united, or could the king suppose James would ever love me, when he already bowed to the charms—already knew the virtues which adorn Joan of Somerset—amiable pair! never shall Cicely interrupt the happiness you merit."

Ralph Grey, the son of my widowed sister Alicia, entering, the conversation ceased.

Whatever was the cause of the earl's withdrawing the hopes he had cherished of seeing me (who was his favourite child) seated on a throne, I was happy in being permitted to remain single, and

I had promised not to oppose, with violence, any views he might entertain. The time was expired, fixed for the sojourning of the noble party at Warkworth. My brother Henry was to accompany the earl our father to France, where the king of Scotland was with Henry of England, to petition James that the regent might allow lord Henry to enjoy the estates of his bride in Scotland; the earl of Northumberland, leaving the charge of the eastern marches to a deputy, went with them, while Agnes and I remained with Eleanor at Warkworth; in their society my mind regained in some degree its former tranquillity.

Lady Percy had rejoiced the hearts of her friends, and the numerous vassals of her lord, by the birth of another son. Meanwhile the spring was fast approaching, and the time was fixed, if the roads were tolerable, for our departure, when Eleanor

Eleanor was to accompany us to Raby, where she was to make some stay ere she proceeded further. A few days preceding the one fixed for our quitting Warkworth, there was one of those violent winds we often feel in the month of March; its fury increased towards evening; we had sat with our eyes fixed on the sea, which rose in mountains, and seemed as if its proud waves meant to assume once more dominion over the earth; but as it increased, Agnes accompanied me to the highest turret of the castle. How dreary was the view!

I cast my eyes toward Tinmouth, where, wrapped in mist, it seemed to defy the fury of the storm; the fatal shipwreck I suffered on its rocks rose fresh to my view; again the mournful train of monks, who bore the body of the generous duke, passed as it were before me.

Agnes recalled my thoughts from the recollection of those sad scenes, by di-

recting my attention to where, northward, the prospect is bounded by the Fern Islands—"See you not," said she, "a white sail? my eyes ache with looking, yet I am not certain."

Scarce had I answered, by attending to her request, when the varying clouds, scudding before the wind, suddenly cleared off the gloom, and a bright stripe of sunshine fell upon Dunstanborough Castle; we now distinctly saw the vessel, apparently in great danger: a boat ventured from the shore, to assist them as we supposed; but ere it had gone a few yards from Dunstanborough it disappeared, nor could we hope the ship would long escape the same fate: we stood with our eyes fixed on the spot; again was the sky overcast, and the sail could not be distinguished; a violent shower obliged us to descend; when it ceased, we looked for the vessel, and saw that, clear of the Isles, it was still flying

before

before the wind; night closed thick around, and all was involved in darkness.

The countess caused a solemn service to be performed, in the chapel of the castle, for the souls of those who might perish in the storm; this lasted till midnight; and when I retired to my chamber, convinced that, amidst this war of elements, it would be impossible to sleep, I took not off my clothes, but spent the remainder of the night listening to the storm; the sea roared, and the waves, dashing on the shore, resembled thunder; the wind seemed to shake the very foundation of the castle, and every turret rocked to its basis. My window looked on the sea, yet I could discern nothing, except the dark clouds flying before the wind, through which at intervals the stars appeared with fiery aspect. The morning approached, the stars yielded a fainter light, the wind died away in

hollow murmurs, its fury spent; and all the clamorous tribe of sea-fowls, rising from their nests, spread themselves around in search of food.

Anxious to learn the fate of the vessel we had seen the preceding evening, I ascended the tower where Agnes and I had stood; their sails appeared through the grey dawn, just entering the mouth of the Coquet; the wind, which had blown due north, was changed to the opposite point of the compass. I thanked Heaven, who delivered so many souls from the destruction which had awaited them, and was going to descend in order to inform the countess and Agnes of their safety, when, turning round, I saw, near the southern gate of the castle, on a steed covered with foam, a tall and graceful personage, whose eager attitude proclaimed his courser kept not pace with his wishes; in loud terms he demanded immediate entrance; as he passed into the first

court

court of the castle—"To arms!" he cried, "each domestic, each vassal of the house of Percy! exert your courage to defend Warkworth from the Scots—already do they land—quick, quick, to arms! your lady is in danger!—no Percy near to save, no brother to guard her!—what, shall the fair Agnes Douglas and her rich inheritance be ravished from her noble lord? haste then to arms, ye brave borderers!"

All now was hurry and confusion in the courts of the castle. The faint light did not allow me to distinguish the face of the stranger; yet, could I have deemed it possible, the figure was that of the duke of Orleans; and sure either my senses deceived me, or it was his voice—his manner; yet of late so little had that voice vibrated on my ear, that I might be deceived. I would have descended, but felt myself tremble so, I durst not attempt the winding staircase which led

from

from the tower. Instantly the signal was made for assembling the vassals of the Percys.

I saw the countess enter the court, followed by her damsels, who bore refreshments to the duke, for such the increasing light now assured me he was. The vessel, for whose safety we had been so anxious, had advanced a little way up the river; the Scots were disembarking from it; fury and devastation seemed to hover round them.

Meanwhile the prince appeared to submit with impatience to wait his being equipped in a rich suit of armour, brought by Eleanor's 'squire, and which she herself and her chief damsel were fastening.

The duke wished to lead the troops immediately against the enemy, ere they could form into a regular body; but this was opposed by an aged gentleman belonging to the castle, who long had been

skilled

skilled in those encounters, and urged that they should sally out upon them as they ascended the hill, when, if unsuccessful, at least it was possible they might retreat into the castle, which they could perhaps be able to defend till succour arrived. The best part of the people, together with the governor of the castle, had gone two days ago to the banks of the river Till, where a band of lawless plunderers were committing every species of havoc; therefore Warkworth was left to the charge of those alone who were incapable of making a rapid march.

The Scots, avoiding the town of Warkworth, had nearly reached the hill on which stands the castle; I saw the banner of the Douglases waving to the breeze; I no longer doubted it was the mother of the gentle Agnes, the fierce, the implacable sister of the generous Home, who had planned this expedition.

The duke, mounted on a gallant steed of

of earl Percy's, and followed by a few still-gallant, though feeble retainers of the family, issued out at the gate nearest the sea. The Scots, more than double their number, were marching up the hill; this, of itself, would not have dismayed them, had they not perceived that no banner of the Percys graced their progress, which oft had led them to victory, and to which, in case of necessity, they might rally; discouraged by what they judged ominous of evil, they would have returned, but the duke interposed, and pulling somewhat from his bosom, fastened it to the javelin of the person next him, and loudly exclaimed—" By this shall we conquer; I have sworn, my friends, solemnly, not to abandon this ensign but with my life." It was unfurled, and once more the fatal scarf of Bidet met my sight. " Ah!" sighed I, " this is a bloody sign! shall this lead to victory?— Ah, no! will not the spirit of my lord,

hovering

hovering near, confound its followers in destruction?"

The sun, which, unperceived by the busy inhabitants of Warkworth, had risen out of the bosom of the ocean in all its wonted majesty, now shed its first beams on the banner of the duke; this was accounted by his followers as an omen of success, and setting up a loud shout, they rushed upon their foes. I saw the countess on the battlements, and went to her.

The Scots fell beneath the prowess of the duke, beneath the valour of his soldiers: at length the Scottish leader was wounded, the remainder fled to the ship —how were they confounded when they found the retreating tide had left it, stuck fast in the muddy sides of the river!—again they made a stand; a few only remained alive, who were bound and brought as prisoners to the castle. Eleanor went to welcome our gallant deliverer.

liverer, whilst I visited our sweet Agnes, while, drowned in sorrow, she sat in an apartment whose windows looked up the Coquet.

" Ah," she cried, " wretch that I am! what misery has my fatal passion caused me! what mischief involves the noble houses of Neville and Percy!" At this moment a message came from the countess, begging I would attend her. In the hall lay the wounded person, by whose side stood the duke; he bowed, but spake not.—" Cicely," said the countess, " I shall leave you with this wounded Scot, who has expressed a wish to see you ere he dies." Eleanor quitted the apartment.

The blood forsook my cheeks (which had been suffused with crimson, as my eyes encountered those of the duke) when I viewed, expiring before me, the traitor Gilbert.—" Ah!" said he, with a dying voice, " my crimes are too great to ask for pardon, though at length touch-

ed

ed with a penitence, deep and sincere! Had it pleased Providence to have prolonged my life a little longer, I meant to have humbly entreated admission into a convent, where, in prayer and the severest austerity, I trusted to have spent my days; my penitence is not accepted at the throne of grace; I am dying, lady, my crimes unexpiated: yet witness for me, my lord—ah! tell, when I cannot, lady Cicely, that this penitence was real!—tell her, good my lord, my endeavours to save Warkworth from the furious lady Douglas, who has, as well as I, met the punishment her crimes deserve; she headed, in man's attire, this expedition, and lies amongst the slain."

Life now seemed fled for some time, but he recovered and spoke again.

"Lady Cicely, irreparable are the crimes I have committed; in Spain, all the presents of the good sir William, all the bounty of lord Beauchamp, were spent

spent in secret debauchery. In concert with lady Warwick, who by large bribes bound me to her interest, I fatally deceived the duke of Orleans; for this, my lord, I dare not ask your forgiveness; to lady Warwick did I reveal the hidden papers of my worthy master, sir William, in the cell on the banks of the Tees—stipulating the treasure buried with them should be mine; she was amazed at the vastness of this sum; I went to hide it in a certain spot; robbers deprived me of the glittering prize, and again was I a dependant on lady Warwick's bounty. When her schemes were defeated by Jaques rescuing lady Cicely, she fled from her castle in such haste as betrayed her eagerness of securing her safety: attended by a single domestic and myself, we crossed the country, reaching the sea on the coast of Yorkshire; here then she recollected having left the papers belonging to sir William; afraid to re-

turn,

turn, she gave me directions where to find them, and embarked for Antwerp, whither I was to follow her.

"Arrived at the castle of Barnard, and in possession of what secured my power over the countess, I took the road to Scotland; I made myself known to lady Douglas; I formed to her a plausible excuse for my apparent detention. Again was I trusted by her; she acquainted me with her schemes in regard to her daughter and lord Henry; the gentleness, the sweetness of the lovely Agnes wrought almost a miracle; I conceived the idea of saving her from the evils her fierce mother threatened her with: from her too I learned the duke of Orleans staid long at Raby; that he was wounded, as I was convinced Monsieur Bidet and the duke were the same."

Here the strength of Gilbert seemed exhausted, and again he fainted. Recovering, he exclaimed—"Oh! ere I die, let me say, the papers—the important

papers,

papers, clearly proving lady Warwick's arts, and substantiating lord Beauchamp's claims, the evidence of the marriage of the lady Theresa, the birth of her child, with proofs of his identity, I secured in a chest, which is lashed to the mast of the ship—these are, lady Cicely, all the atonement left me to make."

Again he stopped, and we thought him gone for ever.—" Spare me a little longer, oh God!" he once more faintly cried—" the sudden death of donna Katherine—the infant left under her care—"

His voice grew indistinct, yet he said somewhat of lady Warwick, D'Aranjeus' heirs, don Juan, and Castile—what a fatal conjunction! Still he seemed to speak, though not audibly; the last convulsion of nature took place, and his soul left the body.

Overcome by this scene, I fainted, and was borne by the prince into another apartment; on my recovery, I saw him

bending

bending over me, with all the tender solicitude a parent could feel for a dying infant; his eyes sparkled with joy, as again life mantled over my face.

"Ah, my lord!" I cried, "is he really dead? alas, my child! sure those last words of Gilbert imported that mischief awaited thee."

The duke attempted to quiet my fears—a little more composed, "What brought you," said I, "my lord, so seasonably to our rescue?"

"It is, Cicely, trust me, with the knowledge of the earl; I have not—I mean not—I dare not infringe your commands; ere noon shall I quit Warkworth."

"Talk not thus, Orleans," I replied; "you need rest and refreshment; what! shall the champion of lady Percy—the gallant defender of Warkworth, not taste of the hospitality which reigns within its walls?"

Dressed in martial habiliments, and extended

extended as dead on a bier, lady Douglas was brought into the castle.

"Providence," said the duke, "has yet, I trust, blessings in store for you; but see, forsaking the habit of her sex, disgraced and wounded, the fierce lady Douglas has come to perish beneath the walls of Warkworth! her body has just entered the court; it shall charitably receive burial, even from those she persecuted."

"Heaven," said I, "Orleans, opens wide the arms of mercy! may it forgive as I do! the sweet, the gentle Agnes, how will her heart be rent!—though a monster, that monster is her mother—the papers I must go myself to search for."

"The ship," replied the prince, "lies a mile from hence, and I have long sent a request to the countess, who immediately dispatched two trusty domestics to bring the trunk Gilbert described."

Those

Those kind attentions sunk deep on my heart, my eyes expressed a gratitude speech dared not avow.

"Gilbert said, you, my lord, would inform me of his endeavours to save Warkworth—of his penitence."

"True, he saved Warkworth," rejoined the duke, "and I trust at length he died a penitent. He had heard of my stay at Raby, he knew of my ardent love; himself in possession of papers which decidedly would ruin lady Warwick, his own evidence, and what he knew how to collect in Spain, must finally establish the claims of your child to the titles and estates to which he was heir; already had he experienced, that where I felt obliged, I was generous, perhaps to profusion; lady Douglas's favours were dealt with a sparing hand, and by no means kept pace with his wishes, or with the life he had led since he last quitted Scotland: without revealing who

 he

he was, he favoured the escape of lord Henry and his fair bride, by discovering the plots of his mistress; yet was he amongst the first to condemn, the most eager to pursue; still was he trusted. Lady Douglas had sworn destruction on the whole race of the Nevilles, yet was most solicitous to have first her daughter in her possession; an opportunity offered at once for this purpose, and to gratify her revenge. Agnes, she learnt, remained at Warkworth with you and lady Percy, and that no chieftain of either house was left with you, though the castle was strongly guarded; to Gilbert then did lady Douglas impart her schemes; at her castle on the eastern coast, which already, lady, you know, she prepared a small ship, in which, with a few chosen followers, she meant to embark and attack Warkworth, which, after securing her daughter, she intended to plunder and set fire to.

"Meanwhile,

" Meanwhile, to draw the forces from the castle, a numerous party, allured by hopes of plunder, and promises of reward if they succeeded, were to enter England where they found it best, and endeavour to force their way to Warkworth; and as the English had few soldiers on the borders, she doubted not, those from hence would be sent to oppose the marauders, when they were, by feigning a retreat, to draw them from Warkworth as far as possible.

" In full possession of this important secret, resolving to throw himself on my generosity for his future support, or rather I hope at last sincerely penitent, he sent, by a son which he had, a long account of all he told you—all I have related, adding, after having so repeatedly been convicted of treachery, he durst not, to either the noble families of Neville or Percy, presume to send; but that he hoped I might be able to take such steps as

would ensure the safety of the ladies, and he would contrive to delay, a few days, both expeditions.

"One day only intervened between the time I received the account, and that fixed by lady Douglas for setting out; I acquainted my faithful Jaques, who immediately took horse for London, where you know the earl of Westmoreland still remained, as, from the fall he received, he was unable to accompany lord Henry to France—what a day of restless impatience did I spend, each moment of which was so precious! You were, Cicely, in danger, and Orleans, a prisoner, could not, alas! defend—could only waste his soul in wishes and prayers, which availed you not. Evening brought the earl to Windsor; producing an order which justified his so doing—'Behold,' he cried, 'Orleans, if you will undertake the relief of Warkworth—the saving my children, I will stay at Windsor, the surety

ty for your return. Alas! my age will not allow the speed that is necessary, nor, among all my numerous family, is there one who is near, and able, to undertake the expedition; go thou then with all thy speed: this is an order,' presenting me with one, 'which will procure three horses, as on the king's commission.'

"Thanking the earl for this proof of confidence, I set out, attended by two domestics of the earl's; Jaques joined us a few miles north of London; upheld by his affection, he followed me to York, though long ere then my speed had distanced the others; I saw the vessel hover off the coast; I urged my steed to its utmost—thank Heaven, my speed was not in vain! Too late had I come to your rescue, could they have made, as they wished last night, the mouth of the Coquet; but the violent storm drove them far past it; with difficulty they kept clear of the rocks; the wind changing, they were landed, but exhausted by

 fatigue,

fatigue, otherwise what chance had the aged troop that encountered them, hardy, robust, and inured to war?—ah, how merciful was Providence!—alas, Cicely! had they landed at midnight, too sure lady Douglas had been triumphant."

The countess entered, she informed us that the mother of Agnes still lived, that the wounds she had received were in no mortal part; the deepest was on her shoulder, which now the surgeon was dressing, at which, with her accustomed humour, though ill and faint, she expressed great impatience.

Eleanor now, in graceful terms, returned her thanks to our deliverer, and begged to understand by whom she thus was obliged; the duke seemed pained by my sister's expressions of gratitude.

He in brief terms told her, that the person who had so recently expired had formerly been under obligations to him; knew also the regard his kinsman, Monsieur Bidet, had for lady Cicely; there-

fore

fore had sent to acquaint him with her danger, which he, imparting to the earl, had at the same time offered himself for the expedition; this being accepted, he was happy in having been the means of saving Warkworth from its furious invaders.

"But say," rejoined Eleanor, "what name do you bear? what arms are you entitled to? certain I am, you are noble; your air, your manner bespeaks you so—in vain would you seek to hide it."

Gracefully he knelt to the countess—"Behold," he exclaimed, "thou beauteous and exalted dame, he who was once the duke of Orleans, who once was, it is true, thought the ornament of the ill-fated Charles's court, but who led, at the fatal day of Agincourt, an army to destruction, and himself to captivity; but he begs, lady, you will not reveal who he is—let not the finger of curiosity be pointed at him, let not even your

 lord

lord hereafter know of this; alas! I could not bear his thanks: say I was a stranger —say, shipwrecked on your coast, I heard of your danger, and flew to your rescue."

More conversation passed, in which the countess solemnly promised to comply with the request, and expressed her surprise at the interest he took in the safety of those unknown to him, which the duke answered by alleging that he had, during his captivity, experienced many favours from the earl. Eleanor quitted the room.—" Ah," said the prince, " Cicely! how little do I merit those thanks! each word stabbed me to the heart."

" Orleans," I rejoined, " why talk thus?—ah, that it was in the power of the Nevilles to bestow on you such a recompence as you could receive!"

A momentary flash of joy beamed over the countenance of the prince.— " What," he exclained, " and does Cicely

ly talk of recompencing Orleans? ah! knows she not there is but one he wishes of all the universe contains?" He stopped, he recollected himself, and sighing, proceeded—"Alas! that one he dare not aspire to!" He had seized, as it were involuntarily, my hand, and had raised it almost to his lips; but ere he concluded, let it fall, and it dropt heavily.

"I meant," said I, blushing, "my lord, that my father—that our influence with the king might restore you to your friends, to your country."

"Why talk you of banishment?—yes, you esteem my breathing the same air with you too great a blessing; ah! why do you look on me with such gentleness? this heart, this palpitating heart, where you will reign for ever unrivalled, sure cannot long sustain this."

"Alas, my lord! why probe you so painfully into every recess of my soul? alas! knew you the sad conflicts which

 harrow

harrow up every feeling, you would not thus deeply search a wound your presence tears open."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed the duke, "does still the sight of Orleans offend you? still do you hate? teach me, oh, teach me, all ye saints, to bear it!"

Rising, he walked about in the utmost agitation—"Orleans, why will you thus misinterpret my words?"

He stopped, and gazing on me, cried—"Cicely, I am wrong—forgive me—I respect your feelings, your sense of propriety; but, alas! I have not yet acquired a sufficient command over myself; could I, as once at Raby, sometimes behold you, I should learn to govern passions, but little accustomed to be controlled."

He seated himself near me—"Will you then excuse this strange flight?"

I held out my hand to him, saying—"Indeed, my lord, I do; yet think, Orleans, how hasty you are to judge—how ready,

ready, by fits of impatience, to give vent to feelings you want fortitude to subdue! Ah! you know not with what a sad variety of feelings is her bosom torn you so rashly accuse. I saw you at the castle of St. Aubin, you claimed me as a prisoner; rudely was, through your means, every joy ravished from this widowed heart; yet for me have you braved danger, fatigue, and death; yes, for me would you have renounced every thing dear—life, fame, honour, to obtain my love; even to-day, Orleans, the banner beneath which you led the vassals of Percy to victory—that banner has been triumphantly displayed, where, oh my God! remembrance sickens at it; yet think you, my lord, the heart of Cicely more firm, more insensible than the rock on which this castle stands? Ah! how shall she act? how reconcile her different, her jarring passions? shall she act as becomes the mother of the infant count D'Aranjeus? shall she sus-

 tain

tain her part with consistency? Alas! you force me to banish you; when I offer you friendship, do you not reject it? Ah! would I could recall my duty to—"

I stopped, my face was turned from the duke, who implored my pardon, and endeavoured to sooth my perturbed soul, whilst I forgot, by his soft and insinuating manner, he had so recently offended; I remembered but the love which had urged him to an exertion almost incredible—which had saved Warkworth; and I thought of my obligations, though I expressed them not with the warmth of Eleanor. Orleans could not fail seeing my gratitude; even the messengers sent for the trunk containing the papers regarding my child were forgot, till lady Percy entering, expressed her wonder at the stay they made. I resolved immediately to go myself; the prince accompanied me; ere we reached the ship, the rising smoke clouded the air; we drew near

near a number of peasants shouting and dancing round a fire. I perceived it was composed of a part of the Scotch vessel which they had seized on; close to it lay the trunk, all the precious mementoes it contained consumed to ashes. I sunk on the ground, devoid of life or motion, and was conveyed back to the castle by the duke. Ah, what a sad fatality hung over me!—"The curse of the count D'Aranjeus still," said I, "pursues the offspring of Theresa! alas, my child! thou wert innocent of the sin of disobedience."

I retired to my apartment, at the door of which Orleans spent the greatest part of the remaining day.

Next morning I learnt lady Douglas was better than could have been expected; and expressing a wish to see her daughter, Agnes had visited her, and sustained the interview with a tolerable degree of fortitude.

Jaques

Jaques arrived about noon; the eyes of this faithful creature overflowed with joy to see me, and to him did I fully acknowledge the obligations I felt to the prince, who, yielding to the solicitations of Eleanor, spent another day at the castle; she was charmed by the graces, accomplishments of the duke—by the elegance of his conversation; nor could she fail to admire the gallantry of our deliverer, his fine person, enlightened by a countenance at once noble, yet fascinating—"Ah! why," would she say, "not allow me to present you hereafter to my lord? how gladly would the generous soul of Harry Percy own his obligations! how gladly receive, and return a friendship worthy of both!"

As evening approached, the spirits of the duke seemed to quit him; he appeared lost in thought, and when the countess addressed herself to him, he prefaced with a sigh the answer he was about to make.

make. Eleanor going to inquire after lady Douglas—"Cicely," said the prince, "shall the morning again bless me by beholding you? perhaps we may never meet again."

"No, no, my lord! spare me—spare yourself the pain of saying farewell. Passing through the court, a large bush of rosemary adorns the window of an apartment which joins mine—mark it, Orleans! there perhaps, if my spirits fail me not, I may see you pass: with a childish heedlessness, at Bidet, I mounted the battlements to view your departure; but Warkworth shall not witness my folly."

He began to entreat, when the countess returned, and, at the hour of rest, received and returned our thanks and good wishes with a countenance which bordered on despair; the prince had before refused the escort Eleanor had intended he should have, as Jaques had also

also refused to stay at Warkworth, and resolved to attend his master.

At length the morning broke, and the duke was on horseback ere the sun had risen, yet failed he not to discover the sacred bush; by it stood Cicely, who felt, Matilda, while she saw the venerable Jaques follow his master out of the gates, as if left alone in the world. I sat down to reflect on what had passed, the danger we had escaped, our fears for the ship which held our enemies, the storm sent by an overruling Providence which prevented their landing in the dead of night, and afforded time for Orleans to reach Warkworth.

I had seen the fatal scarf of Bidet, borne as an ensign to lead the vassals of Percy to victory, to conquest, for Cicely. Two of my enemies were vanquished before my eyes, and I was almost in possession of papers and documents which

eventually

eventually must have established my child's claim, and have turned the wicked schemes of lady Warwick, with double disgrace, on her own head; but this hope had now also fled, with every other I had formed on that dear object.

Gilbert, when again wholly in my power, was dead; the implacable lady Douglas, struck by the duke of Orleans, lay wounded in a castle of the Percys—was attended by a daughter of the house of Neville! My thoughts now recurred to Orleans—how gracefully, how modestly did he accept the thanks of the countess of Northumberland!

Lady Douglas declared herself penitent, assured her daughter and Eleanor she would convince them it was real, should she recover. In a fortnight's time, with all a lover's speed — all a husband's anxiety, arrived my brother Henry; he at first refused to visit lady Douglas, but after repeated solicitations consenting,

senting, she put into his hands a writing, which settled the whole of her possessions on her daughter, reserving only a small part, which she purposed giving to the nunnery of Coldingham, whither she meant to retire; there, by prayer and unfeigned penitence, to endeavour making her peace with Heaven; and there to meditate on her past conduct, and endeavour to calm, to subdue, those violent passions which had been the source of such miseries.

She was now able to quit her chamber, and laying aside all animosity, I resolved to visit her, although still feeling a repugnance to behold a woman I had never offended, yet who had inflicted on me so many evils; long ere this, in my voyage from Spain, had I seen her, yet I was then incapable of knowledge or reflection.

I entered the apartment, at the upper end of which was lady Douglas; Agnes

was employed in changing the position of a cushion which supported her, and my brother sat on the other side, and appeared recounting somewhat to entertain them; lady Douglas, by the assistance of Agnes and my brother, rose on my approaching her.

I was shocked at contemplating a figure which, of late, had been so elegant; the wound she had received on her shoulder had rendered one arm useless, and an arrow, which pierced her knee, had deprived her steps for ever of that grace which used to distinguish them; her face shewed features as fine, eyes as brilliant, as her brother sir Alexander; that commanding and dignified look too was hers, but the charming sensibility which graced his countenance was supplied in hers by the marks of those fierce passions which inflamed her heart: well might the mild and gentle Agnes tremble before such a mother.

"Rise

"Rise not, lady Douglas, for me!" and I assisted in replacing her.

"Alas!" she said, "how little do I deserve your pardon! how little the pity which beams from your eyes! you, lady Cicely, whom I wantonly forced from your home, and to which, when, after numberless dangers, you were returning again, I seized, and again made my prisoner!"

"Lady Douglas," I replied, "let the past be forgotten. I am come to visit the mother of lord Henry's spouse, not the sworn foe of his race; for wise ends, no doubt, did I sustain these misfortunes; you were but the instrument of Heaven."

Ever violent in her temper, lady Douglas, at the sight of me, was in agonies of remorse: more calm in succeeding conversations, she inquired after the fate of the noble Frenchman who had accompanied my flight from Scotland. I

informed

informed her of our shipwreck, and she wept with me the fate of the generous duke, whose real name I still carefully concealed; lady Douglas acknowledged herself so charmed by his gallant and elegant deportment, that gladly would she have made him the lord of her vast possessions, but that he pleaded another engagement.

How was it possible that at Warkworth I could forget Orleans! Eleanor for ever speaking of our obligations, for ever referring to me, as she mentioned some gallant action, or some elegant description or strange adventure, with which he had strove to amuse her; whilst lady Douglas was never weary of extolling his noble parent.

The sudden appearance of Orleans at Warkworth had caused various conjectures to be formed, all wide of the truth; though all deemed him noble, none knew whence he came, as Jaques's secresy also

also was invincible; nor did the more superstitious scruple to assert he was sent from heaven to defend the towers of Warkworth, that it was Hotspur slain at Shrewsbury, the father of the earl, who came to defend his ancient possessions. Eleanor, agreeable to what the prince desired, having said he was shipwrecked on the coast, but that she knew not who he was, still further encouraged this belief; true, the victory seemed almost miraculous, and those who believed he was human acknowledged his gallantry could be only equalled by the Percys, and that his person seemed above what usually fell to mortals: yet in one respect all agreed, that the banner was either a consecrated or an enchanted trophy, and all regretted it had not been left behind, convinced it would again lead to certain victory.

Lady Douglas was able to travel; and a safe conduct being procured, she set

out,

out, attended by her daughter and lord Henry, to the stately nunnery of Coldingham, where lady Douglas was to remain, her daughter and her spouse intending to proceed from thence and visit the regent, who, it was expected, would give them immediate possession of their lands; for so had king James decreed.

Accompanied by my beloved sister Percy, I arrived at Raby, where I found the earl and countess of Westmoreland. My father declared his intention of no longer mixing in the busy scenes of the court or camp, but that he would spend the remainder of his days amidst his vassals, in peaceful retirement.

I parted with regret from Eleanor, who went to meet her lord; the shades of Raby had lost the power to charm, although it was the lovely month of May, and all nature but myself seemed to own the influence of the season.

No traces could be found of lady Warwick;

wick; to her son my father had dropped some hints of her arts; the earl flew into a rage, and offered to die in defence of his mother's fame and honour.

"Ah," said I, "my father! no hopes remain for my child; when the flames rose at the side of the Coquet, they vanished for ever—they died with Gilbert."

The news now arrived of the treaty of Troyes, by which king Henry was constituted regent of France; this was soon after followed by his marriage with the princess Katherine, daughter of the miserable Charles the Sixth. My father often expressed his sense of the obligations he was under to the duke of Orleans—often said he would intercede with Henry for his release, could any means be found to secure his interest to the English, which was so powerful as to divide France into factions; to such discourses I rarely returned any answer, afraid to trust myself on a subject,

ject where I felt so forcibly the weakness of my soul."

No news reached us from Castile, and the summer was spent partly at Raby and Brancepeth, and in visits to some of my brothers and sisters; my sister Alicia Grey, and lady Scroop of Bolton, both widowed by the hand of justice, accompanied us in these excursions.

Christmas was this year kept with more than usual slpendour at Raby, on account of the successes in France and the marriage of the king.

The royal couple landed early in the spring in England. The earl and countess went to assist at the queen's coronation; and although sorely against my inclination, I found myself obliged to accompany them—But here allow me to pause, Matilda.

I had now enjoyed a long calm, save when the form of Orleans rushed along my fancy—you now behold me ready

to launch into fresh scenes—excuse my frailties—pity them as you have my sorrows. I was now going to view splendour—to share it, yet conscious it bestowed not happiness; I was about to excite in bosoms envy at a lot which would have more properly excited pity. Ah, Matilda! how, as I have seen the crowd thicken, and each eye bent on the Rose of Raby, has my heart sickened at the sound of flattery! May the blessings of the virtuous hover round the towers of Lumley! where dwells the dearest, dearest friend of

CICELY.

ARRIVED at court, I was shortly after introduced to the queen, and was struck by a beauty of that dazzling kind which binds the judgment in fetters; possessing

possessing an unbounded stock of vivacity, she oft, regardless of the dignity of her station, gave way to her gaiety of heart, indulging herself at the expence of those who dared not retaliate; you, when a child, Matilda, once saw Katherine, though not as consort of the victorious Henry, not as queen of England, but as wife of Owen Tudor.

At court, I became with Katherine, although I scarce knew why (unless it was speaking her own language with fluency), a favourite. Henry still honoured me by his friendship; descended from the royal house of Lancaster, the daughter too of the great earl of Westmoreland, all conspired to make me conspicuous, to make the share of beauty I possessed, and the graces of my person, the subject of every song, the discourse of the noble, and the admiration of the crowd; then it was, as it became the fa-

shion to admire me, that I was first styled *the Rose of Raby;* and those who openly professed themselves my admirers wore, in compliment to me, embroidered on some conspicuous part of their garments, a white rose; nay, so general it became, that almost all those who wished to be reckoned gay or gallant made it their trophy—fatal badge! unfortunate distinction!

The king and queen, attended by a numerous and brilliant court, went North, in order to keep Easter at York; James king of Scotland accompanied Henry, adding by his presence to the lustre of the circle; his learning, virtue, and affability, rendered him universally beloved.

Soon after our arrival at York, my father, drawing me aside, put into my hands the following letter, begging I would peruse it.

"CICELY,

"CICELY, be not startled at the signature, nor deem it a breach of promise that Orleans writes to you. The queen, my cousin, of France has entreated her royal consort and prevailed, that I should join the gay circle which surrounds them at York; I had the king's command, and was in York, Cicely, ere I knew you were there. I write now to ask your permission to behold you in the presence of the whole court—a privilege I shall enjoy in common with others. I seek but this indulgence; yet do you refuse, I will confine myself to my chamber, feign a sickness which perhaps may soon be real—yet will I hope Cicely will not deny every request to

ORLEANS."

"Alas!" said I, "my father, you join the duke against me. It becomes not

me to oppose the wishes of Katherine, nor to think of setting my happiness against the gracious Henry's will."

The earl pressed me to his bosom, bade me meet the duke with composure.

I spent a night restless and agitated; the following day, the whole court accompanied the king and queen to high mass in the great cathedral church. I kept my eyes fixed on my beads, praying earnestly to my paternal saint to assist my devotions; I heard some person near me sigh deeply, my heart beat with uncommon quickness; lifting my eyes, seated near my father, immediately amongst the nobles of the royal house of Lancaster, was the duke of Orleans; his looks not bent on the sacred offices of the church, but ardently fixed on me. The blood suffused with a crimson hue my face, then rushing back to my heart, left my lips pale and lifeless.

"What thus steals the colour from

you,

you, my sweet cousin?" whispered the gay queen; "sure it was not Orleans, whose eyes, fixed this way, have thus strangely disordered you; the boast, the pride of my father's court, his presence spread with smiles the faces of our French dames; the proudest and the fairest have long sighed for him."

I felt again a blush mantle over my face, but without answering the queen, importuned Heaven with rejected prayers; for, in defiance of the sanctity of the place, in despite of the august solemnities of the day, I thought but of Orleans; a mere machine, I went through each ceremony, whilst my heart was destitute of that warmth of piety it was wont to feel. Service over, I retired to my apartment under pretence of indisposition, reflecting on my imprudence, and resolved to appear next day at court as usual.

In the evening I received a billet from the duke—"Why, Cicely," he said, 'give a forced consent? It is obvious I

am still odious to you; it escaped not the queen's observation, nor since mass have you visited her; on me she lays the blame of your absence. What, shall the miserable Orleans deprive the court of Henry of its brightest ornament?—will you, can you bear my sight, or at once pronounce my doom?—only say, 'depart,' and Orleans will obey."

Jaques, the faithful Jaques, was the bearer; he saw me wet the paper with my tears—he saw me hold it to my bosom till they were dry—I took my pen and wrote:—

"Cicely has no will but her father's; shall she then say to Orleans—'depart?'

"Yet why did he, in the sacred fane of St. Peter, expose her to the raillery of the queen? Ah! rather, why did we ever meet? Let us see each other, as if we had never met before."

I gave this to Jaques, and threw myself upon a seat; a soft tap at the door startled me; the billet of the prince was still

still in my hand, again wet by my tears.

Orleans entering, threw himself at my feet—" I am come," said he, " to entreat your pardon."

" Leave me, my lord, leave me!" I replied, and rose up.

" Never, Cicely, till you say you forgive—Speak—had I not your leave to stay at York? Anxious for a look of you, I assisted at mass—have I wrote or asked to see you since I left you at Warkworth? Are you still ignorant what it cost me to obey you? yet have I not implicitly obeyed? You answer me not."

" Orleans, why did you thus steal on me? I was preparing to meet you tomorrow with seeming indifference; but your ardent temper breaks through all bounds."

He laid his hand upon mine; I raised my eyes—the supplicating looks of this animated prince silenced my reproaches.

" Go," said I, " my lord—is not this imprudence? what would be conjectured

tured were it known? To-morrow, sanctioned by the presence of our mutual friends, we may meet." Heaving a deep sigh, he was preparing to withdraw; struck with this proof of his obedience, my heart smote me, and as he opened the door, I held out my hand, saying—"Let us not, my lord, part in anger; I see you are offended with me."

"Ah, Cicely! what avail my reproaches? why repeat to you that this is an unnecessary act of cruelty?"

"Orleans, it is I, the sad, the weak, the irresolute Cicely, who ought to be the accuser; it is you who unnecessarily force me to upbraid; you steal upon my retirement, and unfit me for every duty; in vain do I make resolutions; alas! too well you know—" I stopped, withdrew my hand, and sat down.

The duke knelt before me—"What, beloved of my soul! would you say? how often have you tortured me to a pitch of unutterable agony? have you

not.

not, in terms ambiguous, almost transported me with ecstasy? and when I have hoped—yes, Cicely, when I have dared to hope, you stop—Ah! finish—in pity to me, finish my sentence! the life of Orleans hangs upon those lips"—I was unable to utter a word—"Nay, only say you hate, you despise, you detest me; only speak and kill me at once—I can bear this no longer."

Recovering myself, I said—"My lord, I beg, I entreat you will quit me—I cannot sustain this—to what do you thus madly expose me—yourself? Alas! what seek you to learn? do you wish me to say, I am miserable? in that, Orleans, you cannot equal Cicely." Bursting from him, I retired into an adjoining apartment, and the duke departed.

The following day I saw him at court; Katherine again rallied me, but Henry, the generous, the gallant king, who knew of the prince's attachment, kindly endeavoured,

deavoured, by his condescension and affability, to take off all restraint.

Orleans took an opportunity of saying, he would solemnly promise no more to intrude; re-assured by this, I saw him day after day, and the embarrassment I had found vanished, except when rallied by the queen, who used to say, her good cousin of Orleans possessed his intellects but at stated intervals, having put his senses under my direction, and when I was absent, he was a body without a soul. The duke was, indeed, the very soul and ornament of this brilliant circle; the diversions, which were varied and splendid, were well adapted for displaying the elegant taste, fine person, and address of the prince. A strong friendship subsisted between the king of Scotland and him, cemented perhaps by a similarity of misfortunes; though both gallant and accomplished, their tempers differed widely; James was rather grave than

than gay, and had not that fire and impetuosity of character which still distinguished his friend.

The beautiful Jane of Somerset graced the court. I was, Matilda, the confidant of her love for the amiable king of Scots; here it was I formed a friendship with her, which ceased not when she was advanced to a throne. The friends and confidants of those charming princes, Orleans and I were frequently together, which afforded him many opportunities of showing me, in concert with James, many gallant attentions, which thus passed unobserved by all but myself.

One pleasant evening, walking on the banks of the Ouse, it was proposed by the queen, that the following day she would embark and sail a few miles down, and that all who were then present should attend her.

The sun next morning rose with splendour, and the embarkation was a gay scene of hurry; the two kings of England

land and Scotland, with the queen, Jane of Somerset, and others of distinction, already were seated in the royal barge. I stood by the edge of the water ready to step in; by my side the dukes of Orleans and Gloucester, each ready to assist me, when Katherine, who knew the rivalry of those princes, pretended, if any more came in, the barge would sink—"You," said she, "our brother of Gloucester, and gallant cousin of Orleans, protect the Rose of Raby—on your fealty we charge you."

I knew the queen's humour, and saw she meant to teaze me; I felt mortified, and would not have entered the boat, which waited now for me, but that I supposed it would only give Katherine fresh cause for raillery. Think, Matilda, if this could be reckoned a voyage of pleasure. I felt a secret kind of dislike, for which I could not account, to Gloucester, who assiduously endeavoured to amuse me, whilst Orleans, respecting the delicacy

cacy of my situation, and vexed at the strange manœuvre of the queen, sat almost silent.

The barge which held the royal guests far outstript ours. The wind blew strong, although it was calm when we left York; and in shifting the sail the boat overset, to which I in part contributed, for being unused to excursions of this kind, when I saw the boat lean on one side, I ran across, with an unconscious intention of sheltering myself nearer Orleans, who was seated opposite to me.

I was plunged into the water, and my only recollection leads me to the struggling for life. Again, Matilda, I felt—I breathed—my first sensations were painful. At length I opened my eyes; on his knees, by the bed on which I was laid, was the duke of Orleans, his looks rivetted on me; a woman, whose dress corresponded with the appearance of the cottage,

cottage, and who was busy about me, exclaimed—"Nay, kill not thus yourself with grief—behold, she lives!"

Orleans poured out his thanks to the mighty Power who had restored me—yet I could not speak; but a person arriving who brought cordials and refreshments from a neighbouring house, some of which I swallowed, my first observation was, that Orleans was wet; that he had also been in danger; and I thanked God internally for his safety—"Stay not," I cried, "my lord, by me; change those dripping garments."

"Ah, Cicely! think not of me; I am well—I am happy now you are restored to life."

"But how," I rejoined, "my lord, was I rescued from death?"

"Ask me not," he said; "when you are perfectly restored, you shall know all."

"Ah," said I, "Orleans, Cicely owes her life again to your exertions; this heart

heart is not mistaken—it burns with gratitude—would I had it in my power to evince it!"

The door of the cottage opened; the news of our disaster had reached my brother George, he had come to assist me. Soon after arrived from York, in the queen's carriage, my father, a servant having been dispatched there on my being taken out of the Ouse. The earl brought dresses for the duke of Orleans and myself. I was no sooner equipped than lifted into the carriage, where, by my father's desire, Orleans accompanied us.

"To this generous prince," said my father, "do I owe that I again behold you; how shall I express my gratitude to the Almighty! my obligations to him who saved your life, at the hazard of his own!

"On you, my child, do I rest these obligations, nor shall the grateful heart

of

of Cicely disown the debt. When the boat overset, it was near the shore; with ease the prince reached it by swimming. Borne up by your garments, you were hurried into the middle of the stream; regardless of every thing but your safety, again he plunged in—you sunk—again you appeared, the duke caught you, and with you swam to land.'

"Humphrey of Gloucester was saved by the boatmen, but vexed at being outdone in gallantry, has not yet made his appearance before you—he went straight to York."

I turned to the prince, I would have spoke, the words died on my lips—I laid my hand on his, which raising gracefully to his lips—"That look of kindness, Cicely, overpays for years of misery."

Little more passed till I was clasped to the anxious bosom of the countess my mother, who poured out her gratitude

for

for my preservation. The following day I received the congratulations of all the court, excepting the duke of Gloucester, who still maintained a sullen distance.

The first day I was at court, the king said he wished to speak with me on affairs of some importance; silent and trembling, I followed to his closet, where was my father. I was struck by this seeming preparation, my knees smote each other, scarcely could I support myself as the king addressed himself to my father thus—" Cousin of Westmoreland, here is your fair daughter, whose looks seem fitter for a funeral than a wedding." The blood rushed over my late pallid countenance; it was the glow of vexation, of contempt for the late unknightly conduct of duke Humphrey, whom I imagined was to be proposed to me as a husband.

I dropped on my knees—" Hear," I cried, " my liege, and thou my honoured parent,

parent, ere you propose to me, or I offer to reject, hear and grant my request—Let no earthly spouse be my lot! allow me to go to my sisters, there in quiet wear away the life of lord Beauchamp's widow! —Ah, my father! have you chose, as the protector of your child, him who deserted her in danger! who, mindful of his own safety, left her to the fate that awaited her—left, to sink amidst the waters, her whom he called the fairest of the court, whose fair badge he displayed so proudly, but for whose preservation he dared not encounter difficulty, or hazard a life he had vowed should be devoted for her service!"

"Hush, my child!" said my father.

I recollected myself, recollected the improper warmth I had displayed, and was silent, till again I cried—"Pardon, oh! pardon, my liege, a weak woman who kneels for pity!"

"Rise!" said the gracious Henry; "be not,

not, Cicely, so rash in your decisions! my brother is brave, generous, and noble; nor can I account for his behaviour otherwise than by attributing it to a kind of jealous pride; he loves you, my fair cousin, but it is not for him I request your consent. No, the house of Lancaster must not have you reunited in it; it is for Orleans I entreat, nor am I a stranger to his love; well I know what he has suffered—what he has dared for you."

A faintness seized every sense, scarce I heard the voice of Henry, it died in murmurs within my ear; I sunk on a seat near, and drew a sigh of painful respiration.

Pity, fear, and tender anxiety, were pictured on the face of my father, as I raised my eyes; the countenance also of the king said, he felt much for me; I grasped the hand of my father—"What," said I, in faltering accents, "do I hear? is

it

it you, my lord—you, who wish your child so married? what, wish you the infant count D'Aranjeus to call Orleans—" I stopped, almost suffocated with my feelings; at length tears came to my aid, and the king said, condescendingly—"Too much is Cicely now agitated to judge; you had better, my lord of Westmoreland, retire, and at another opportunity disclose your reasons and mine. But, Cicely, let your determinations be free; reflect seriously on what your father has to disclose, and remember, Henry of Monmouth, who saw and loved you in Picardy, and gladly would have shared with you his throne, will in England protect you from all insults. 'Tis by fate decreed you shall marry; choose therefore the worthiest. To Orleans you can make but one objection; rest satisfied, it was the will of Heaven it should be so; a claim so unsupported by evidence, arms alone must have ended. Ah,

Cicely!

Cicely! the rivers of your native land would have been tinged with blood; Orleans was but an instrument in the hand of Providence, who out of evil bringeth good—whose decrees are deep and unsearchable."

I retired with my father, who leaving me, bid me prepare to see him in an hour's time with composure—"It is no light matter, Cicely, I have to disclose, nor do I doubt it will at once fix your resolutions."

At the earl's return he found me much as he had left me—"Cicely," he said solemnly, "you trifle with me, with your own happiness; your destiny is fixed; then why make both yourself and me miserable by this agitation? Be composed, and listen with attention."

With a kind of solemnity in his manner I had never before seen, the earl began—"Soon after Henry of Lancaster was seated on the throne, I was, you know,

know, in addition to my other honours, created earl marshal of England. Returning to Raby with this fresh title, and anxious to embrace again my wife and children, I resolved, when at Thirsk, to reach my castle that night; to accomplish which, I quitted the more frequented road, and struck across the woods and wilds; my numerous retinue leaving me no cause to dread our journey would be interrupted by the banditti who infested those woods and wastes.

"We travelled on briskly till we entered a thick forest which lays between Richmond and the river Greta; when night began to close around, its darkness was increased by a violent storm. An unusual dread seized the bravest of my train; the forked lightning shot through the gloom which enveloped us; those who had been hired as guides through the forest would no longer take the direction;

rection, overcome by their fears, they knew not which way they were going.

"The rain descended in torrents, every element seemed raging for our lives; I prayed fervently to the holy Saint Cuthbert, the patron of my race, for assistance in this hour of danger, and quickly we discovered a light, which appeared at no great distance; this I endeavoured to reach, ordering my people to follow; the intervening brakes impeded the trembling crew, and those who had followed me, in many a bloody field undaunted, shook with terror in this wood—'Alas!' they cried, 'my lord, whither do you lead? know you not this dreary forest is infested by hellish fiends, who delude the unwary and benighted traveller?'

'This storm, my lord, this strange and unusual storm,' said my chief 'squire (he who had dared every thing in fight), 'is it not of their raising? that light proceeds (I know it well) from the ruins of

a castle long deserted by mortals; there the guilty and unquiet ghosts hold forbidden intercourse—there sacrilege and murder were committed — who enters there of human race returns no more; rather let us, my lord, bear these warring elements than madly deliver ourselves to unholy and damned beings, against whom no earthly force avails.'

"Crossing myself, I cried—'In the name of Him who drove out the unclean spirits, do I trust for help, nor fear the powers of darkness and of evil! to that castle, long supposed their residence, will I go for shelter from this bitter storm.'

'Then, my lord,' said my faithful 'squire, 'with you I dare every thing; I will not desert you in danger. Lead—I shall follow, though to the very pit of destruction.'

"I remembered I had heard this castle had been, in the turbulent reign of king Stephen, fortified, but dismantled by

his

his successor, Henry the Second; here was the lord of it murdered by his nephew, and the holy priest suffered the same fate, being dragged from the altar when excommunicating the vile assassin, upon whom at length justice was done by the baron's son, who was at his father's death an infant, but preserved by the loyal vassals till he attained to manhood, when he asserted his claim before the king, and defeated his base relation; afterwards he espoused a daughter of the house of Raby, but lived not long to enjoy his lands and honours, which he left no child to inherit. His death was sudden; nor passed unsuspected, as its cause, the son of his father's murderer, who asserted his title to the estate, which was claimed by the earl of Richmond, as lord paramount. The vassals took opposite sides; some adhering to the earl, others to the cousin of the baron as the heir; since then, they had lived in constant

warfare. The castle was in ruins, the lands uncultivated, the vassals slain, dispersed, or subsisting by plunder.

"My retinue still slowly followed—'Stay here,' I cried aloud, 'you who fear to pursue where your lord leads, or provide, according as your separate fears dictate, each man as he wishes.' Of all my numerous train, one alone rose superior to the terror which pervaded them, and followed Barnard and myself; this was Hugh—he whose loyal, yet feeble arms would have borne you when you returned from the fatal malice of lady Douglas.

"Arrived at the castle, I ordered Hugh to sound his horn.—'Whoever,' said I, 'are the inhabitants of this ruin, they will not sure refuse us shelter; most probably outcasts from society, they live upon rapine and plunder, yet the gold of Westmoreland shall ransom the lives of himself and followers.'

"The

"The light, which had diffused its brightness through the woods, vanished; again it appeared, and seemed to glide from room to room, till we finally lost sight of it on the eastern side of the castle. My 'squire rained a shower of blows on the gate; it was fastened, and defied his attempts. I proposed to visit that part of the ruin where the light disappeared.

'Alack! my lord,' said Barnard, 'why thus tempt your fate? Too sure this is the residence of demons, who have allured us here, but to destroy; the strange vanishing of this light, will not that convince you?'

'Fear not,' I replied; 'is not Ralph of Raby with you? did he ever yet shrink at danger?'

He was preparing to speak, but I pushed my steed over the fallen stones, and found, by the gleam of the lightning, the eastern entrance, the gate of

which, thrown off its hinges, was laid across the path."

"Ah, did you then, my dear father, enter?"

"Hush, Cicely!" he said; "that I am thus particular, is necessary; it is now proper you should know the cause of my actions, the spring of determinations which to you have perhaps appeared rash."

Ah! thought I, what is the cause of all the misery, the various misery, young as I am, I have sustained? with a trembling impatience I listened; the earl proceeded as follows:—

"Dismounting—'Hold,' said I, 'my steed, whilst I explore the entrance of this dreaded place.'

'It shall not be told at Raby,' said my faithful 'squire, 'the earl marshal was deserted by me;' and as he spoke, gave the reins of his horse to Hugh, who, afraid

afraid to be left behind, fastened them to the gate.

" Entering, we ranged over a large apartment, till we found a door which was fastened on the inside; applying our united force, the bolts gave way, and we discovered ourselves in an apartment still larger than the other, but out of which we vainly tried to find any other passage than that by which we had entered. Not a single ray of light visited us, which gave additional horror to our situation.

' Cease, my lord, to search for another passage, which might only lead us further into danger—only put us more in the power of the accursed inhabitants; if we are doomed to die by their malice, here let it be.'

' List,' said Hugh.

" At that moment, as if beneath our feet, we heard the grating noise of bolts

drawing back, and distinctly a door opened upon rusty hinges, and again shut; yet we distinguished no step; if there was any, it must be light as air; yet a deep sigh convinced us some one could not be far distant.

"The lightning was so vivid, it flashed through each cranny of the building; the thunder, which rolled over our heads, echoed through each dismal chamber, the castle shook to its foundations; another peal succeeded, more terrible than the preceding, which struck us to the ground, and the building seemed to be falling on all sides. When we recovered ourselves, we saw a part of the wall had tumbled down, which gave entrance into a long passage, that appeared to lead towards other parts of the castle; a bright blaze of light shone at the extreme end of the passage, and we now saw it was the ancient chapel we were in. Even I shuddered;

dered; here had the most daring murder, the most horrid sacrilege, been committed. The thunder was not so loud, and the rain fell in torrents.

'Let us,' said I, drawing my sword, 'be satisfied from whence this light proceeds; this is a night to waken the consciences of the wicked, and make them remember there must come a day of retribution.' Ashamed of their fears, afraid to be left behind, I was followed by my 'squire and Hugh, and passed the doors of a number of dismal-looking apartments, empty and ruinous. We stopped—we listened—no sound caught our ears, save the hollow growling of the thunder, save the rain pelting against the walls of the castle. The silence was broken by Barnard, who fell at my feet. 'Allow,' said he, 'my lord, your faithful 'squire, ere you proceed, to beg you would not; as yet we may retreat. Have I ever,

my lord, yet shrunk where you led? But did the light proceed from the retreat of beings like ourselves, though abandoned to crimes of every nature, they might be awed by your power, bribed by your gold; but these are spirits of darkness, or midnight hags, who, performing at this hour their incantations, have conjured up this dreadful storm: rather let us brave its utmost fury than trust ourselves in their power, from which mortal never yet escaped with impunity.'

'Rather,' said I, 'my friend, let us pray to Heaven, and all its holy saints, to preserve us.'

"We knelt, each one addressing himself to Heaven in fervent prayer; which done—'Now,' I cried, 'my friends, proceed.' A sudden yell sounded through the empty hall, which was succeeded by a kind of rumbling noise; the light disappeared—

appeared—again we were involved in darkness.

"Hugh now remembered he had with him the means of procuring a light; which having done, I wished to proceed to where the blaze seemed to issue; but yielding to their request, ascended a lofty staircase, which way they preferred to the one I purposed. We found ourselves in a gallery of great length, along which moved a figure, clad in a robe of white, the full folds of which floated behind; from its head descended a veil, also white, the long ends of which reached to the ground; its form, its figure, were effectually concealed, nor could we conjecture whether it was human or not; its movements seemed graceful. Terrified by this appearance, my companions stopped; slowly I followed.

'Turn,' I exclaimed, 'I conjure you! turn, if human—if pity dwells in your

bosom for creatures of your own species, who, rather than endure the pelting of this storm, have here sought refuge; or if you are some injured and unhappy spirit, I conjure you, in his name who is the Judge of the just and unjust, declare why thus, against the laws of nature, you walk this upper world—why thus, at this lone hour, you range along these dismal dwellings?'

"It answered not but by a deep sigh, nor did it turn to view who thus interrogated it. 'Nay, stop—listen—it is no mean, no base-born hind that now intrudes upon your steps; know it is I, Ralph Neville, earl of Westmoreland. Prayer, masses shall not be wanting, if you are condemned to the pains of purgatory—oh! speak, speak to me!'

"At the mention of my name it seemed to start, and, lost in the gloom, vanished from my sight; I followed, and found the gallery terminated by a room which still

still had some remains of furniture; a large chest stood on one side, above which hung the picture of that lord who was murdered; his son was upon one side, and Joan of Raby, whom he married, on the other. Searching this apartment, I could find no traces of any person; yet, after a silent and attentive listening of some minutes, I heard a door open and again shut, as if with caution, somewhere near, although I could not distinguish where. Complying with the ardent petition of my companions, I descended with them another staircase, which was at the extreme end of the gallery, and opposite the room we had ineffectually searched. We now found ourselves in that part of the castle where the chief apartments had been, and fixed upon one which had but one entrance into it. This we fastened as well as we could, and Hugh kindling a fire with the mouldering remains of furniture, we resolved to spend

spend the rest of the night; nor was refreshment entirely wanting, Hugh having a bottle of cordial liquor with him, and some cold provisions.

"Thus warmed and refreshed, their fears no longer had power to banish sleep. Although I felt overpowered by fatigue, I resolved to keep watch; all was silent, except, at intervals, the thunder, which died away in hollow sounds on my ear; the fire cast a dismal glare on the desolated walls, and fantastic shadows seemed to glide across them. I began to reflect on our situation, and forgot at that time none of the numerous stories I had heard regarding this ruin—the light which had led us hither—its strange disappearance, which agreed with what I had been told. Might not, thought I, the storm be raised by demons? The blaze of light—the yells—the total darkness which succeeded our prayers—the figure we had all distinctly seen gliding along the gallery

—its

—its strange envelopments and sudden vanishing—I almost shook with terror, as it rose fresh to my imagination.

"I was resolved to shake off the impression it had left. Ah, thought I, what would the gallant Percy say, did he know that Ralph of Raby was frightened by goblins, by ideal beings! I began to reason away my dread; the storm, I thought, might proceed from natural causes, the blaze of light might be somewhat set on fire by the lightning; but the figure—I was lost in doubt, in fearful conjecture, yet firmly resolved to search in the morning every corner of the castle. At length those thoughts gave way to the stillness which reigned around, and I was sunk into that repose my strength and spirits required, when I heard a voice of uncommon clearness, with an air of solemn dignity, pronounce—'Doth Ralph Neville seek refuge in sleep? is he no longer able to watch a night upon arms? for what

what end was he conducted here? Presumptuous, yet favoured mortal, didst thou suppose thy feeble barricades could exclude me? See how futile they have proved! lift thine eyes, behold!'—I obeyed; before me stood the same figure I had so vainly pursued along the gallery, still veiled—'Follow me,' said the voice, 'unless thou wantest the courage of thy race."

"And did you, my lord," I cried, "follow then the phantom?"

"Have I yet, my child, tarnished the lustre of the house of Raby by cowardice? My sword lay unsheathed by me; snatching it with one hand, with the other I took a burning brand. 'Dost thou, mortal man,' said the voice, 'mean to turn thy sword against beings whose bodies are impalpable? meanest thou, Ralph of Raby, to buffet the air? or if I am, as thou art, human, came I not to thee in the garb of peace? I visit thee to instruct—to warn.'

The

The weapon dropped from my hand, and in silence I followed through the solitary building—again ascending the staircase, and passing along the same gallery, entered the apartment I mentioned as terminating it.

'Fear not,' it cried; 'behold me—look on me—veiled as I am from thy prying sight, are the ways of Providence to man; know thou wert conducted hither for wise purposes, as yet unknown to thee.'

"The transparency of the robes of this form promised not to conceal it; but their lucid whiteness and ever-varying folds made it impossible to guess of what nature was its shape. Taller than the race of mortals, its voice was sweet and commanding—its movements graceful.

'To thee, if thou fearest not to follow, shall the veil of futurity be raised.'

'Lead,' I cried, 'whoever, whatever thou art! fearless I shall follow, trusting in

in Him who by a word created the world and all it contains. The angels and just spirits serve and praise him from the beginning, and the very devils believe and tremble.'

"A door flew open; the figure entering, I followed; written in letters of flame, on the opposite wall, were these memorable words—*The ways of Providence are inscrutable—they are veiled from the sons of dust; bow thou then in silence to the ever wise, ever just and perfect decrees of Him who out of seeming evil bringeth good.*

'Ah, now,' I said, falling on my knees, 'I am convinced thou art most truly a minister from Heaven.'

'Worship is not required from thee to me—rise, Ralph Neville! sufficient it is that thou knowest I am concerned for thee, nor heed what is my nature. In thy wish to serve the house of Lancaster, from which thy wife is descended, thou hast assisted to raise Henry of Boling-

broke

broke to the throne—thou, in thy ill-placed ardour, forgottest Richard was thy benefactor—that he had, with liberal hand, heaped lands and honours on thee; yet, Ralph of Raby, thou raised the standard of revolt, swayed by the haughty Joan of Beaufort, thy wife—thou turned thine arms, the arms of thy vassals, against him thou hadst sworn to defend, and branded thy name with perjury—with ingratitude. For this shall thy posterity dearly atone. This night should thy life have been the forfeit, hadst thou not entered here.—*The ways of Providence—are they not inscrutable?* Thou wert in the midst of assassins who had sworn thy destruction, but the morning's sun shall rise on them as dead men; be thou grateful for this preservation—let it expand thy heart with charity.'

'Ah!' said I, 'rather let my life be the forfeit, than that my posterity, innocent

nocent of my crimes, should miserably atone for them.'

'Bow in silence, son of the dust,' continued my instructor, 'to the decrees of Providence; the rivers of thy native land shall flow with blood when a descendant of thine takes as his arms the bear and ragged staff."

I shuddered, Matilda. My father, casting on me a look of pity, proceeded.

"Then shall the father lift his sword against his son, the child against his parents; brothers shall imbrue their hands in brothers' blood. Mistaken chieftains of the North, dearly shall ye rue the house of Lancaster.'—'Ah! hush, in pity,' I cried, 'hush!'—'It comes not, Ralph, in thy days, if thou art firm in the allegiance thou hast sworn to Henry—perjure not thyself doubly. The *silver crescent* shall flee before the *dun bull*, a cloud shall obscure it, but again shall it show its light on high, when a fair daugh-

ter

ter of thine shall be dazzled by its beams. The evil cometh not in thy days, unless thou bringest it from a distant land of the west—unless, from its golden groves, thou transplant a tender shoot to languish beneath the English sky, and whose death shall wound the fair fame of its parent.

'Listen again—when the *bear* and the *silver boar* shall draw in one yoke, the lands of England shall lay untilled, watered by the blood of its sons—by the tears of its widows; then shall the lion, meek as a lamb, be led in chains, whilst its fierce mate shall spread abroad desolation."

Ah, Matilda! why was I born? Has not this since been fully verified, though then the sense was concealed by mystery?

"Know," continued the voice, 'Joan, thy spouse, shall bear unto thee another daughter; nourish her with care; from her shall descend a long line of chieftains

and

and of princes; let her choice be prudent —kings will love, princes contend; and of whatever nation she marries one of royal blood, to it she gives rulers for ever; her fate hangs on a thread; perhaps she may suffer much, but seek not to learn how. *The decrees of Providence—are they not inscrutable?* Confine what thou hast learnt to thyself, till a king talks of allying himself to thee. Go thou in peace—thou knowest all that is given thee to learn; the morning breaks—thy followers will awake—they will wonder at thy absence.'

"The figure touched me—I fainted and fell—when I recovered, it had vanished. I was again in the desolate apartment: beside me lay my 'squire and Hugh, still in the arms of sleep; the fire was nearly burnt out, and the morning yielded a faint light, through the broken windows. I arose from my hard couch, and traversed the room, thinking of what I had heard.

heard. Had I really followed the phantom? or was my imagination so strongly impressed with strange ideas, that this was but a vision? The brand I had taken with me I found scarce extinguished. I went to the window to watch the coming day; light clouds scudded across the sky, and the thunder, at a great distance, at times awfully interrupted the stillness of the hour. Aurora foretold the approach of the sun. I called my companions; every corner of the ruin was searched; nothing could be discovered that could lead to any conjecture regarding the light which directed us there, or to satisfy us whether the figure we had seen was human or no. Though unsatisfied, I resolved to depart. We mounted our horses, but passing round the north side of the castle, a deep groan saluted my ears. I dismounted, resolved to learn from whence it proceeded. Half-buried beneath some fallen

stones, lay one of my retinue, whose bold and determined character I knew.

'Speak,' I cried, 'Walter! what brought you here?'

'Alas, my lord!' he said, 'may a dying wretch hope for pardon? Oh, for a holy priest to shrive me!'

'Speak!' I cried; 'if thou art guilty of some hidden crime, confess yourself to me.'

'Grant me then, my lord, your pardon. Against you, did I imagine a crime the most horrid—thanks to God, who allowed me not to perpetrate it!'

'May that God,' I said, 'pardon thee, poor wretch, as I do!"

'Know then,' said the dying man, 'a band of firm adherents to king Richard swore, by every thing sacred, to revenge him; they are not suspected by Harry of Lancaster, though he is surrounded by them; they pervade his most secret apartments; a part rouses the Percys, the Mortimers,

Mortimers, to arms; a part, mingling with your train, purposed last night, in this wild forest, to slay you. You resolved to visit this castle; my comrades doubted not the demons who inhabit it would effect their design for them.

'I knew nor man nor goblin would fright the lord of Raby; I followed, resolved alone to execute a deed I judged as glorious; a peal of thunder shook the castle; it tumbled, and buried me in its ruins.'

"His anguish allowed him not to say more, and life and misery left him at once.

"With downcast looks, as if ashamed of their desertion, a part of my retinue appeared, who falling at my feet, I granted what they implored, my pardon for their fault.—'Yet,' said I, 'where are your fellows? have they still the dread of demons to fright th m from their duty?"

"They proceeded to inform me, that they had found some shelter in a woodman's hovel, where discoursing of my danger, one of them, who had been the chief of their desertion, cried—'May all the foes of king Richard—all the friends of Henry of Bolingbroke, perish as miserably as, I trust and hope, at this moment, does Ralph of Raby.'

"On this a quarrel ensued; the part which adhered to my cause defeated the traitors; four were killed, the rest fled. Here then was the veracity of my teacher proved—'The morning sun,' said the phantom, 'should rise on my enemies dead men.' I hastened to Raby—'Let thy heart, grateful for thy preservation, expand with charity,' counselled the vision. I sent presents to St. Cuthbert's shrine, amongst which was the rich jewel given me by Richard the Second, that day I was created earl. I built and endowed

dowed the hospital in Staindrop; over its gates was carved—

'*The ways of Providence are inscrutable; out of evil he bringeth forth good; bow in silence to the decrees of the Almighty.*'

"The Percys rose in arms; I was prepared for them; their progress was stopped. The *silver crescent* of the North fled before the *dun bull* of Raby; a cloud eclipsed it—again was the prophecy fulfilled. Meanwhile, Cicely, thou wert born; I obeyed the injunction; I reared thee, my child, with no common care, the darling, the prop of my age; to thee do I look forward for the accomplishment of the prophecy, current in the North since the days of the first lord of Raby, which says, Kings shall descend from Fitz-Maldred.

"Proposals were made by the earl of Warwick for your sister Margery, as wife to Richard, then supposed his heir;

no, thought I, no descendant of mine shall bear as their arms the bear and ragged staff; the rivers of my native land shall be red with blood then, said the vision. To my daughter I unfolded the fatal prophecy, and declaring through me to the earl, her choice was made, she took the veil at Barking.

"Percy implored my protection; Eleanor saw and loved him; again was the *silver crescent mounted on high*, and its beams diffused joy. Ah, Cicely! what did I feel when you were carried by force from Raby! her fate, said the vision, hangs on a thread; perhaps she is doomed to suffer. Giving up to my sons, the lords Dacres and Mauly, whom, ere then, had been appointed my assistants in the charge of the borders, the sole command, as soon as I learnt you were in France, there I joined the king. Strangely, wonderfully were you restored, when I had almost ceased to hope.

Henry

Henry loved; he told you of his passion, and meant to share with you his throne.

"Again were you lost to me; lady St. Aubin informed me of your marriage; the generous king was your advocate; he vowed to lavish honours on the gallant youth you had chosen; he would gild his humble name; his glorious deeds at Agincourt should be emblazoned by his arms, which, handed down to posterity, shall declare his prowess. 'False prophecy!' I ejaculated, 'how hast thou misled me! no minister wast thou of Heaven, but too sure sent from the father of lies to deceive; my child has married no prince of royal blood, but, disgrace to her name! has allied herself to the child of charity.'—I resolved to keep this secret, and blot for ever the hope, the delight of my eyes, from her noble ancestry. You wrote, and my old friend, sir William Fitzhugh, as if risen from the grave, asserted the claim of your husband on the

 lands

lands and titles of Warwick, and informed me the child rescued by sir Robert Umfraville, and brought up at my table, was his grandson. was his heir, lineal heir of the noble family of D'Aranjeus; that Catalina, the queen regent of Castile, had allowed his claim; and that he expected it would also be so in England, by the earl of Warwick, whose grandson he would prove him. Ah! thought I, my child is doomed to suffer; the appointed time draws nigh, when a descendant of mine shall take as his arms the *bear and ragged staff*; brothers then shall dip their hands in each other's blood; the child shall lift its hands to its parent, for that mercy it shall not receive.

"The king resolved at once to espouse your cause with the Beauchamps, to which he took steps that finally must have prevailed. I reflected on the bloodshed this would cause; too well it agreed with the fatal prophecy, and revealed to

Henry

Henry what I had seen and heard; for so the vision commanded when the king sought my alliance; ere that, the gracious Henry had imparted to me his design: those pretensions founded in truth, yet slightly supported by evidence, were discouraged; a child was born, a descendant of mine, who, if those claims were allowed, must bear the arms which were to bring misery on England; by the sword alone I saw too plainly those pretensions must be decided.

"You returned, Cicely, to Raby, a widow; your infant was in Castile. '*The* evil,' said the phantom, 'comes not in thy days, unless thou bringest it from the land of the west—unless from the golden groves thou bringest a tender shoot to sicken beneath an English sky. Whatever nation she marries a prince of, to it she gives rulers for ever. Thus was I deterred from beholding the infant I longed to acknowledge. Policy

 obliged

obliged Henry to wish the hand of the princess Katherine, and renounce the hopes of you: anxious for your happiness, he would have bestowed you on the king of Scotland; amiable, virtuous, and accomplished, his good qualities interested every one in his behalf; nor wanted he that rank of which he is possessed to raise him above mankind. Commissioned by Henry, I set out for Scotland to propose terms to the regent for James's release. I came to Raby, and sought you in its shades—I found Orleans at your feet—I saw father Francis, Jaques too, the ancient servant of monsieur Bidet. I was obliged to quit Raby without appearing to have seen you, but there I resolved no longer to oppose the mutual wishes of the king of Scotland and the lovely niece of the countess of Westmoreland.

"I consulted Henry on his return from France, and Orleans was asked if

any

any prior engagement subsisted. He declared himself free, but doubted your compliance with my views, though he had so recently saved you at Warkworth. Humphrey duke of Gloucester asks your hand, but Henry, aware of the prophecy, wishes no prince of English race for your spouse, and refuses. Do you consent to my wishes—to the wishes of the king, a large district of France is to be erected into an independent principality. Thus will, by your means, the strength of France be divided. The prophecy, if fulfilled in you, will effectually secure a strict ally to England. Another, and perhaps a more powerful inducement, still remains, Cicely; I doubt not you are sensible your child, the infant count D'Aranjeus, must not visit England; Orleans has sworn to adopt him as his son—where shall he find a protector so powerful, so attached? See you not, my child, your fate is fixed?"

 "I do,

"I do, my lord, and submit in silence to its decrees; yet allow me to ask and hope you will grant one request. In the castle where my destiny was foretold, I will marry Orleans, if at all; I will search through the ruins, and endeavour to discover every recess; perhaps the phantom may, by appearing to me, more fully explain what was enveloped in mystery to you."

"Why, my child, give not a free, an unreserved consent? Henry and Katherine wish the marriage kept at York, after which Orleans accompanies the king to France, in order to take possession of the provinces over which he is to rule. A wedding must sure be inauspicious at such a dismal dwelling."

"Then," said I, "my father, allow me, ere I marry, to visit the fatal castle."

"Why," cried the earl, "do you, my child, entertain a wish which may prove

your

your ruin? The castle still stands—still the benighted traveller views the light which shifts from place to place; banditti infest the surrounding forest with desultory war; nor have the neighbouring chieftains been able to meet with them, as at day they seek shelter in recesses where no one dares to follow. Who, Cicely, will guard your steps in this strange expedition?"

"The brave, the generous duke shall protect me; already at the hazard of his life has he done so. Meanwhile let this marriage of destiny be kept secret till I return from this dreary castle."

My mother entering, when the earl quitted me, clasping me to her bosom, my head sunk on her shoulder, and a shower of tears relieved my full heart.

"Why weep you, my child?" said the countess; "sure you do not regret the consent you have given; reflect, Ci-

cely, to what a height this match will raise you—an independent princess."

"Ah, my mother! ambition weighs not with me—I aspire not to rank nor titles above what I have. Alas! how infinitely happier had I been, a stranger to both!"

"Shall," cried the countess, "the descendant of the victorious Edward, the grandchild of the illustrious John of Gaunt—himself a king, not think of aspiring to the rank she so justly merits?"—Alas! the countess knew not of the prophecy with which I was so recently acquainted. I spoke not, and she continued—"Is not Orleans all your fancy could imagine in a hero? Alike graceful in every action, in every exercise, he was formed to be the envy and the admiration of the world. Why then, Cicely, those tears—those blushes—this contrariety of emotions you exhibit? Why

deny

deny the love your eyes have declared you feel for the prince?"

"Ah! spare me, my mother, spare me! Leave me to collect my scattered senses—mine is a strange, a wayward fate."

The countess, saying the duke would soon be with me, bade me compose myself, and departed.

"Ah! am I not," I exclaimed, throwing my head on the table before me, "the sport of fortune?—Ah! why is Orleans so amiable? why has he valour? why grace, elegance, wit, and accomplishments? why does his manly countenance beam with every feeling which adorns his noble and generous soul? why did we ever meet? ah, why at Raby did my heart betray me?

"Ah! that I might spend in Castile, with my child, the remainder of my days! why am I not suffered by cruel fate to seek with my sister, my noble-minded Jane,

Jane, that peace she found alone within a convent's hallowed walls?"

"Talk not thus, my adored Cicely!" said an expressive voice; "shall the Rose of Raby lose in a convent its sweetness? No; entwined with the lilies of France, it shall bloom the admiration of the world."

"Orleans," I said, "you cease to respect my peculiar situation—you forget the past; learn to check those raptures, so wounding to my feelings. If I submit to what seems my destiny, think you I am callous to remembrance?"

I rose to quit the room—the duke caught my robe.

"Hear me," he cried, "Cicely! am I then deceived? the earl said you consented—I feared he did but flatter—he said it was a free consent. I may, nay must, if you refuse me, be for ever miserable—but I will not make you so. May you enjoy that peace I can never know!"

"And

"And shall Cicely," I replied, "procure it by making him miserable who for her sake has risked every thing? Ah, no, no—the earl has informed you truly; but, Orleans, you hurry, you surprise me."

Again tears relieved my agitation; they were wiped off by the duke, who, all gentleness, soothed every perturbed feeling to peace. I communicated to him my resolution of visiting, ere my fate was united to his, the castle of destiny.

"Ah," said the prince, "let me entreat you not to go to that fated spot; should Humphrey of Gloucester hear of it, you are lost to me for ever; quit not York till you are mine—till no earthly power can divide us."

"Orleans," I replied, "a few days, and you will then be master of my fate; what of evil shall betide Cicely, if you are her guard?"

"A sad

"A sad presentiment," he rejoined, "sits at my heart, that this journey will be fatal to my hopes—that at length Gloucester——"

"Never, never," I interrupted. "Orleans, hear me solemnly swear, duke Humphrey shall never be the husband of Cicely, whose affections you think so loose, so light. Ah! did you know the struggles I have sustained—how reluctantly I yielded my heart to the power you have acquired over me, you would not thus suspect my change. No, Orleans, never can the ambitious-minded Gloucester have any influence in that heart which reluctantly yielded to you; proud of its conquest, it can never stoop to another love. Behold, my lord, this ring (and I put it on my finger)—here shall it stay till I am your wedded wife, or till you say, Cicely, I no longer claim your promise—I resign you to him whom

Heaven

Heaven and over-ruling fate decree for you."

The following morning we left York to visit the ruined castle. The earl and duke accompanied me, and we were attended by a numerous and well-appointed retinue. Soon after we passed through Richmond, where we dined the second day, I fell from my palfrey, and was considerably hurt. My father wished me to return, but, bent upon proceeding, although keeping my seat with great pain, I refused. A strong party gallopped on to take possession of a part of the castle ere it was dark. The shades of evening, when we reached the forest (which, owing to my fall, was some hours later than we hoped), were beginning to take possession of the sky, and the interwoven branches shut out the faint remains of day. I felt an unusual dread hang over me.

Orleans, riding by my side, laid his

hand

hand upon mine—"Cicely," he said, "you tremble."

"Alas, my lord! I dread, I fear—yet know not what."

"Shall Orleans," he rejoined, "also confess he feels similar sensations. A strange horror sits on his soul, Cicely; we tempt our fates—this night, this fatal night, severs us for ever, or this strong, this sad presentiment, which hangs heavy on my spirits, is false."

I sighed—"Ah! no, Orleans, do not—ah! do not thus presage! When happiness seems within my reach, sure it shall not always be snatched from me."

"Talk not thus, my children," said the earl; "that omen at this moment, is it not auspicious? thus shall you rise, thus shall you shine;" and my father pointed to the moon, which was emerging from a cloud, behind which she had just risen; her beams fell on a large piece of water, whose glassy bosom was shadowed on one

one side by the ancient castle; and as our train wound round its margin, the whole cavalcade was reflected on its surface. A figure completely armed seemed to rise out of the water, and seizing the reins of the prince's horse, cried, with a deep and awful voice—'Whither dost thou go, presumptuous mortal? Thinkest thou to enter that fated pile? Thinkest thou to bear in triumph to the shores of France the fair Rose of Raby? shall the shades of Bidet immure her? No, never, traitor to thy name! What, wouldst thou for her rashly sacrifice thy already-distracted country? tear in pieces—disjoint the fertile provinces of France? This shall not be. Follow where I lead, Charles of Orleans."

The duke's steed no longer felt the restraining rein, but plunging amidst the water, together with the horrid apparition, all vanished from my view.

I fainted — again life revisited my sinking frame—I looked up—every window

dow, each rugged loophole of the castle, was illuminated—all so late enveloped in darkness.—"Ah! Orleans," I exclaimed, "how true were thy presentiments of evil!—why was I thus madly bent upon destruction?" The earl, with his accustomed firmness, endeavoured to sustain my spirits—to save me from despair; and himself supporting me on a horse, which a page led, we skirted round the edge of the lake without seeing any thing which might lead to any probable conjecture respecting the fate of the prince. We reached the gate of the castle; my father would have conveyed me into it, but all the ardour I had felt to visit it was fled—I shuddered at the proposition. "Alas! the life of the duke is sacrificed to my headstrong folly! No, my father," I cried, "your child will not enter here."

One of the domestics came forth, and assured the earl that fires had been kindled

led in every apartment, into which were thrown drugs and charms to drive away the evil and troubled spirits with which the castle was believed to be inhabited. In vain the earl entreated me no longer to expose myself to the damp air of night, but enter. Obstinate in my refusal, he left me to the care of the attendants to search for the duke—to be assured of whose safety, I would have given, had I possessed them, Matilda, crowns and kingdoms. My father returned to me, but without any intelligence of him he sought.

" I will go," I franticly exclaimed; " I will call upon his name. Did the voice of Cicely sound in his ear, nor man nor goblin would have strength to detain him. Ah, wretch that I am!" I continued, "closed for ever is that ear which drank with greedy pleasure each accent of the miserable Cicely. Orleans lays, a pale corpse, at the bottom of that accursed lake;

lake; that noble, that generous heart has ceased to vibrate; would he not have cause to curse, with his last breath, her who led him to his undoing? Why does not the ground open and swallow me up, quick, alive as I am? signs and prodigies here foretold my wretched being, and here shall it end wonderfully, miserably. Orleans, Orleans! thou shouldst not so easily have yielded to every foolish wish of mine.—I will seek him in the lake, there at least our fates shall be alike—Nay, hold me not, my lord—for me he dared every thing; shall I not be permitted to do so for him?"

I burst from my father, but, unable to walk, fell on the ground; the earl knelt by me; in vain were his endeavours, when he tried to comfort me, by saying that the attendants were making preparations to drag the lake, although it had already been searched, and as yet the prince, nor even the steed which

bore

bore him into the water, could be found: equally vain was the persuasion of my father to make me remove from the damp ground, on which, deaf to his prayers, I remained immoveable.

The moon was declined in the heavens, and morning faintly streaking the east, gave promise of day. The servants assured us the water contained not what they sought: pale with fear, they urged their lord to quit the fatal scene, and produced a kind of litter, on which I might be conveyed to Raby, from which we were only a few miles distant: listening to their proposals, the earl was attempting, as gentler means failed, to convey me from where I was by force.

"Attempt it not," I cried; "expect not, my father, I will stir from this spot, till, dead or alive, I again behold my Orleans; I am, Charles, thy betrothed wife. Oh! why didst thou leave me? Hear

me,

me, hear me, if thy unembodied spirit wanders near, and help thy Cicely!"

A cold and trembling hand touched me; I screamed, and casting a look behind, beheld the duke, Matilda. I started, forgetting the pain of my bruises, from the ground—I flung my arms round his neck, I wept upon his bosom—"Ah," I cried, "do I again behold you alive!"

Orleans shrunk from my embrace, his eyes were averted; the big sigh declared his bursting heart laboured with anguish unknown to me; a deathlike paleness sat on his countenance, with an expression of horror, of dread, of every passion which harrows up the soul.—"Orleans," I exclaimed, "why are you thus? Speak! ah, kill me not with suspense!"

"Oh," said the prince, "this night—this fatal night! we part to meet no more; heedless what befalls me, I leave you. Oh Cicely! I say adieu for ever!"

He

He darted from me with the swiftness of thought, whilst I exclaimed—"Stay, my preserver, my life, Orleans—you shall not quit me thus—am I not thy wife?"

He was gone, vanished from my sight; I was overcome by what I had suffered, and fell into strong convulsions, at recovering from which I was in a state of stupidity, insensible to the mighty misfortune I had sustained, and no longer opposed my father's will, but was carried to Raby, unconscious almost of existence.

The pain I suffered from the bruise, in falling from my horse, together with laying on the damp ground, and my agitation of mind, contributed to bring upon me a fever, during which I was attended by the earl and father Francis; the countess still remained, by the earl's desire, at court, ignorant of my danger. The duke again lay at the point of death in an adjoining apartment; lord West-

 moreland

moreland having seized, and by force dragged him to Raby, afraid to trust to what the first frenzied working of despair might lead him to commit.

At length youth and my strength of constitution, which has prolonged, to so late a period, a life I have oft prayed might be ended, restored me so far as to be pronounced out of danger from the fever; but weak and languid, my spirits were sunk beyond the power of exertion; I spoke not, except giving or refusing an assent to what was asked me. The earl, more terrified by this stupid melancholy than my late danger, thought an interview with Orleans was the only probable means to rouse me. The duke had not yet quitted his apartment, and weak as we both were, father Francis thought the experiment a dangerous one. Meanwhile, orders arrived for lord Westmoreland to hasten to Beverly, where the court was; news having been received of the defeat

defeat and death of the duke of Clarence before Bauge; ere he left Raby, the earl sent to Orleans, imparting his wish to see him, which, fearful of retarding his recovery, he had abstained from.

"Go," said the duke, "tell the earl I am prepared to see him."

Notwithstanding this boasted preparation, the prince's agitation was extreme on seeing my father, whom he assured he could not bear the interview with me, and begged to quit Raby with its lord —"I will go," said he, "to Beverly, I will disclose to Henry my resolutions—I will imitate his generous conduct—I will not deceive; no, I will say, I long for an opportunity to retrieve my lost fame—I will say, Charles of Orleans burns for revenge on the desolators of his native land. Yes, my lord of Westmoreland, I wish but for length of days to retrieve my disgrace, though my love can only end when I

cease to exist—yes, my life gladly would I sacrifice to give peace to Cicely; yet shall my faith to France be firm, nor shall succeeding generations point me out to posterity, a disgrace to my name, a traitor to my country; and say, prompted by ambition to secure himself a kingdom, he scrupled not to carve it out of the dismembered provinces of his native land. Let me, my lord, I conjure you, quit Raby; here shall I again forget what I owe to my country: is it possible I am here, under the same roof with her I love above every earthly consideration but honour; and even that, should I see her again, would she triumph over! why did my destiny inflict so severe a trial?"

The earl said, he could not answer to the king his leaving Raby without his express command, but that conscious he had not lightly, or without sufficient reason, rejected a match he had so ardently

ly sought, he would be very far from influencing Henry to resent what might be deemed an insult.

Immediately after this conference, the earl set out, leaving me in charge of father Francis. The pale and agitated looks of Orleans were for ever present to my imagination, and his last words had not yet ceased to vibrate on my ear; and oft I started from my broken slumbers, frightened by the ghostly form, as it rose from the lake, in the fatal forest.

By the order of the good father, I had been carried, for the benefit of the air, into the court of the castle; Jaques, who had attended on his master, was walking across it; roused at beholding this well-known face, I cried—"Whither do you go? ah! where is the duke your master? do I dream? do I live?—Speak, thou faithful follower of the house of Orleans." —He came to me—"Oh!" I continued, "if the memory of him whose life was

sacrificed for me—for me, Jaques, be dear to you, say the duke of Orleans lives—has he left England? has he made some French maiden his wife? has he forgot Cicely?"

"Compose yourself, my adored lady," he replied, whilst the tears rolled down his face: "ah! why did I live to behold this day? ah! why, when my loved lord was arrived at the summit he had so long scarce dared to hope attaining, should he be dashed down for ever, and doomed to drag out a miserable life, without again beholding her who alone could endear life to him!"

"Say then, oh say, Jaques, where is the duke?"

Father Francis appeared—"My child," he said, "agitate not thus yourself; the prince is not far distant; allow me to lead you back to your apartment, and I will inform you of all you wish to know."

Happy to see me restored to my recollection,

collection, the father informed me of the earl having Orleans conveyed to Raby. He also told me of his illness and recovery, and assuring me of seeing him next day, if I wished it, left me to visit the duke, with whom he found Jaques, who had already acquainted him of his meeting with me; and the next day was fixed for Orleans visiting me. Ah, Matilda! am I to describe this interview, recalling, as I do, all I felt, when the door opening, presented to me, leaning on Jaques, the duke of Orleans, thin, pale, dejected, and still wearing an air of sickness.—Jaques retired, whilst slowly, and with trembling steps, I advanced to meet Orleans. "Is it thus, my lord," I said, "we meet? what has my fatal curiosity made you suffer? Speak! what strange reverse is this, I am doomed to experience? how are you changed! Once, Charles, you would have flown to meet me; now you shun, you hate,

you despise me. Orleans, you answer not."

He raised his eyes from the ground, on which they had been thrown, and fixed them with a kind of wildness upon me.

"Ah! why," said he, with a hasty tone of voice, "did I see you? Absent, I thought to have submitted with due resignation to the decrees of fate; but again beholding you, convinces me I cannot bear to live, yet be for ever deprived of you: why did lord Westmoreland take such cruel care of me? Oh! I can no longer drag about this hated existence! loving ardently, passionately, as I have done for years, without almost a ray of hope, and when at last—oh! when at last, Cicely, putting on her finger the ring I had given as a token of friendship, of submission to her will, said, there it should stay till she was my wedded wife, or till I said, I no longer claim her promise,

mise, but resigned her to him Heaven and an over-ruling fate decreed for her—Heaven decrees her not for me. Ah, Cicely! an overruling fate divides us for ever."

Then rising with an empassioned and almost-frantic air, he snatched me to his bosom—"This one—this last embrace; sure the destinies deny not this, nor can you refuse this last comfort."

Throwing himself at my feet, his eyes rivetted on me, he cried—"I terrify you—despise, reject, spurn me from you; alas, Cicely! I know not what I do."

Again he started up—again he threw his arms around me; his whole frame was convulsed, and his heart beat as if it would have leapt from the manly bosom it throbbed against; then hastily quitting me—"Adieu," he cried, "for ever, Cicely! Pray for the wretched Orleans; again on earth he cannot know peace; in the grave alone shall he rest."

He was leaving the apartment, but terrified at the desperation of his manner,

and the frantic air with which he spoke, I called up all my resolution, and placing myself before the door, through which he must pass, exclaimed—" Nay, stay, my lord; leave me not till you explain the fatal mystery with which your words, your actions, are alike enveloped. Oh! in pity say what is the cause of our separation; only say to-morrow you will see me—to-morrow you will be more composed; say then you will reveal this hidden secret. Why thus in vain must Cicely plead to Orleans?"

" In vain did you say? no, whilst this pulse vibrates, that voice can never sound in vain in the ears of him who gladly would shut out the din of war, of ambition, of all the jarring and tumultuous passions, to listen to that tongue; listening to it, he forgets every thing besides loving you—what magic is in it!"—Starting from me—" Ah! let me go whilst I have power! you know not what this interview costs me; to-morrow did you say I should see you!

Oh!

Oh! to-morrow I shall be far distant from those walls—I cannot exist longer at Raby."

"Behold," I cried, with all the solemnity I could assume, "Orleans, this ring! when it was given to me, I was bid to look on you as my defender, my champion; now you desert, you abandon me. At York—nay, look on it my lord! I put it on this same finger; then did I consider myself as your wife. Here is the ring, the pledge of amity, the seal of love"—and I drew it from my finger—"take it, my lord of Orleans; give it her, amongst the dames of France, you deem worthy to wear it, to share with you each joy, each care, the chequers of this motley world—Cicely shall wear it no more."

The duke took the hand which held the ring—"Nay, wound not thus," he said, "thou adored of my soul, every feeling of my heart! ah! let us fly, let us quit this hated world, let us seek the

young count D'Aranjeus; with him let us fly to Piedmont; amidst its hills and smiling valleys we shall be safe; there shall we laugh at destiny. Let France, let England, alternately, madly bathe in each other's blood, in the blood of their children; the Piedmontese shall shelter the son of Valentina, the grandson of their beloved duke John; we shall be safe amidst its mountains—are you resolved? are you prepared? Will the daughter of the earl of Westmoreland accompany the enamoured Orleans? will she quit with him the towers of her father?"

"Why," said I, "Orleans, talk you of flight? why should we fly? Has not my father given me to your wishes? has not Henry consented to release you without ransom—yielding to you a large district, and offering his assistance to procure for you the sovereignty of Milan? nay, has he not assured you of succession

cession to the crown of France, should Katherine give no heir to his kindgom? will not that satisfy your ambition?"

"Cicely," he replied, "why talk you of ambition? it fades, it melts before the love, the boundless passion I feel for you; no, no, nor Henry nor Katherine could, without you, have made me a traitor to France; crowns and sceptres wanted power to do so. Do you love me—love me indeed?"

"Why, my lord, that question? what purpose shall it serve the undone Cicely to say, when you quit me for ever, this heart shall never know again an emotion of love? Forgot by the world, sunk into obscurity, lost to myself, shall I drag out a miserable existence, if it can be called existence, to look around and view all nature a cheerless void."

The duke caught me to his bosom— "Yes, yes," he cried, "Cicely owns her love; begone, ye glittering phantoms of

power

power and of rank! Charles, thy kinsman, shall not assist thy rival Henry to divide with hostile swords thy dominions; my countrymen shall not upbraid, nor shall Henry, the generous king of England, call me perfidious. Titles, vain and empty, shall no longer sound in my ears; lost in some sheltered vale, the din of war shall be forgot—I will live but for thee; unheedful of the world and its vanities, the soft tendrils of the vine shall cover our peaceful cottage; we shall not envy the palaces and castles of France or England; they will but appear splendid prisons, where art and deceit lurk but to ensnare; the myrtle will bloom for us; sheltered beneath some spreading sycamore, we will talk of our loves; thou wilt sooth every perturbed feeling with thy lute—I will be the tutor of thy son. Oh, come! let us fly ere lord Westmoreland returns—ere thou art lost to me for ever; he will not give his daughter, his pride,

pride, the boast of the Nevilles, his idolized Cicely, to a wanderer, an outcast from society, from his friends, for such must I be. When Henry proffered me liberty, he gave promise of increased territory; the earl of Westmoreland added a gift more precious—he gave the fair Rose of Raby to my wishes; but it was to the prince of Orleans—to the heir of Milan. Blinded by a consuming passion, I overlooked the price my already-distracted country was to pay for gratifying my inclinations. Orleans, who ought to have acted as the guardian of France, leagued with enemies conspired to destroy her—no," said he, hastily traversing the apartment, "by St. Louis, my blessed ancestor, I swore to be her protector—again on holy relics have I solemnly vowed to keep firm my faith—love you, my angel, my betrothed, my adored wife! Your Orleans for you quits that rank, that splendid station, you were born to adorn; and

can

can you stoop to wear no coronet but of flowers—to receive no homage but what is extorted by your beauty?—a queen amongst peasants—to exchange the stately halls of Raby for a mud-walled cottage?"

"Oh! why," I interrupted, "Orleans, do you wish to prove a love I have so long struggled against? think you so lightly of it? think you so meanly of the soul of Cicely? think you, Charles, change of station can efface the indelible seal my heart has received? It was not your exalted birth, your power, nor your wealth, which swayed with me; no, it was the ardour of your love, that unrivalled elegance of mind and manner—it was, it is Orleans himself—but you I love; nor riches nor titles can increase or diminish it. A cottage, sheltered by vines you had taught to climb round my casement, would be dearer to me than all the palaces our ancestors possessed in France and

England,

England; secluded from the world and all its sickening vanities, my heart would rest in peace—it was made for such a situation—it hates the pomp, the ostentation, it hitherto has been fated to experience."

"Ah!" he replied, "I knew the soul of my Cicely would rise now, as ever, superior to her sex; she will not desert Orleans, though he be equally banished France and England, unless he betrays the one, or deceives the other—never will he submit to either."

The ring lay on the table where I had thrown it; Orleans put it again on my finger—"Let us," he cried, "entreat father Francis he will unite irrevocably our fates; then shall you be mine, no earthly power shall divide us; we will leave the shores of England. In Piedmont you shall be madame Bidet; is not that name loved by you? my father bore it, when guarding from harm all that was dear to the rash, the headstrong Orleans."

"Are

"Are you not," I rejoined, "still rash in your resolves? ah, Charles! will you not languish, amidst the sequestered vales of Piedmont, for the splendid courts of Paris or of Blois? think, will then a cottage and poor Cicely fill every aching void in that heart which long has panted after rank and power? can the grandson of Charles the Fifth, forgotten by the world, tend a flock of sheep? will he who has marched at the head of armies, spend the flower of his days chasing the wild goat from rock to rock? Ah, Orleans! will you not then detest her, who, forgetting father, mother, king, country, every tie which ought to bind her to society, followed you where you were lost to the world, lost to yourself? No, I will not thus seduce you from your duty, nor shall the fair fame of the daughters of Raby be sullied by Cicely?" Tears relieved my agitated mind. "Go," said I to the duke, "leave me for this day; to-morrow will I again see you."

Father

Father Francis entered as the prince quitted me; I would have spoken, I would have poured out my heart to this venerable friend. "To-night," said he, "endeavour to compose yourself; already you seem exhausted; in the morning I will hear, and give you such advice as Heaven directs me."

The next day the good father was obliged to attend his convent on some important business. I revolved in my mind all the duke had said; was it possible? what were the crimes which were to banish him equally France and England? Unless he betrayed and deceived, he could not stay in either; the high-sounding titles of Orleans, Luxemburgh, Valois, &c. should be sunk in that so dear to me; I would claim only that of Bidet; we should live in a cottage; the promised sceptre should be a shepherd's crook. Cicely, the rural queen amongst village-maids, should wear no coronet but of flowers; my son too should be

with

with me, Orleans his tutor; there would he be safe from the malice of lady Warwick. These reflections seemed like a wandering of the brain; the venerable form of lord Westmoreland weeping for the loss of his darling child—the noble countess, my mother, yielding to despair, intruded not on my thoughts; nor did the gentle Eleanor visit those day-dreams any otherwise than as I beheld her at the castle of Warkworth, returning her acknowledgements to our graceful deliverer; nor did I, that day, wish I had, with Jane, my noble-minded sister, retired from a world I could not hope to enjoy.

Wonder not then, Matilda, that the voice of the duke called up smiles and blushes in my face, as, with a lighter step than I had known since I left York, I went to open the door of the hall in which I sat.

"To-day," said Orleans, as he entered, "I am more in possession of my reason. Alas! shall that gentle, that delicate

cate frame bear all the hardships of so long a journey—all the danger which may attend our escape! Can you indeed endure all, yet not execrate the author of your distress?"

I pointed to my ring—"This, Orleans, is my pledge: but why still talk of escaping? Say what is the cause you accept not the proposals of Henry—what means this mystery?"

"Hear me then," he replied. "I doubt not of your candour, I fear not to lose your esteem; to you will I reveal the mystery, though the life of my dearest friend depends on my secresy. Know then, Cicely, the phantom which apparently rose out of the water led me to the mouth of a cave which overhung the lake, where it commanded me to dismount and follow—'Obey,' it said, 'in silence, nor by seeking to return, awake the speedy vengeance which here shall overtake thee.'—I wished not to return, and thought only of the issue of an

adventure

adventure in which I was so strangely embarked: as I followed the ghostly figure along a gloomy passage which echoed to my steps, at length a ray of light broke in upon us, and we entered a large apartment, whose sides and vaulted roof seemed to glitter as if studded with crystal; in the midst of this room stood a table, on which was placed two swords; I stopped—'Thus far,' I exclaimed, 'have I followed where thou badest me, unmoved, unarmed; if thy designs are innocent of evil, speak—if not, thy arm against mine: if thou art man as I am, we are equal—if not, thy form is impalpable, and fears not wounds, as thou canst feel neither pain nor death.'

"I snatched one of the swords; it dropped from my hand; it was a well-known weapon, long worn by my father, to whom it had been given by a bishop of Liege, and had formerly belonged to Pepin le Gros; I could not be mistaken—there was not time for conjecture; as I

turned

turned aside, I beheld advancing, with his eyes fixed on me, my brother John! (he whom Marriette de Englein bore to my father, and who was reared by the duchess, my exalted mother, with the same tenderness she did her own sons.) I was astonished, and scarce supposed myself awake; he spoke not; at length I broke silence—' Speak,' I cried, ' thou who thus assumest a form so dear; who, what art thou, that thus by seeming that thou art not, abusest my frightened senses? Say, art thou an unembodied spirit, suffering, for the offences done in the flesh, the pains of purgatory? will prayers and masses relieve thee, my wealth shall be given to the holy church, recompensing their intercessions."

" He sprung forward, he clasped me to his bosom. ' No,' he cried, ' I am, Charles, no phantom, unchanged from the hour when Valentina, thy sainted mother, bid thee embrace, and for ever love and protect me as thy brother; then did

did she conjure me to keep for ever in mind her affection—'Let it,' said she, 'be shown by thy attachment to my children; on thy counsels, prudent as wise, they may safely rely.' Did I not then, my lord, promise that my interest, yielding to thine, should be sacrificed with pleasure? that my duty to my country alone should form a balance to that friendship? Yet could I foresee, Orleans, that my duty to France could interfere with my friendship to thee? remember you not, when at St. Dennis with the late dauphin Louis and me, you swore, upon the sacred relics, to spend the last drop of your blood in the defence of your country? That oath, registered in heaven, darest thou, Charles, to violate?'

"I was confounded by the scrutinizing looks of my brother, I shuddered at the thoughts of my breaking so sacred a duty, violating so solemn an oath.

'As yet,' said I, sinking on a seat near, 'I have not betrayed my country.'

'No,' he cried, holding me at arm's length, 'but I have lived to learn you meditated doing so; join, boldly join, thou disgrace to thy royal ancestors! thy arms and those of thy vassals, to the stranger who claims falsely their honours; go, swear fealty to him, bend to the perfidious Isabella; league with her—with the house of Burgundy, the sworn foes of thy family; tear, disjoint the fruitful provinces of France—divide them with Henry, thy new ally; snatch the unstable diadem from the brows of the hapless Charles the Sixth—let it encircle the head of the English monarch; engrave the lilies on his shield; then shall Orleans have liberty to return to his country, bearing with him, as his reward, the Rose of Raby, the seducer of his reason, of his duty—the triumph will be a glorious one; there, Charles, shall you

 point

point to untilled fields, villages destroyed, cities desolated—this, shall you say, is, Cicely, the price my miserable country has paid, that Orleans should obtain you.

"I shuddered at the picture my brother drew. 'Stop, oh stop, my friend, my brother!' I exclaimed; 'is it possible I am plunging into so deep an abyss of guilt? that I am bringing such misery on my native land? Yet, oh! had you known and loved her as I have done, you too would have forgot friends, fame, country, every thing besides the wish to possess her; arrived at the summit of my hopes, can I bear to lose for ever all that is to render life desirable? Speak, what is it you require me to do? Only say not, I must renounce Cicely—all else is easy.'

'Hear me, then,' he rejoined, and falling on his knees, with a devout air, pulled from his bosom a rich crucifix, in which was contained a piece of the holiest

holiest cross; 'behold,' he said, 'Orleans, this; knowest thou not it was thy mother, Valentina's?'—'Ah, yes,' I replied, 'she wore it, I well remember.'

'At St. Dennis,' he continued, 'you swore, on relics equally sacred, to defend your country; I now require you, if you reverence this blessed sign—if still you retain a remembrance of the filial duty you owed your mother, to swear on this cross you will renounce all connexion with the enemies of France, and will not assist in destroying her.'

"Kneeling, I took without hesitation the required oath—'Are you,' I then cried, 'satisfied? or what is it you require more?'

'But this,' replied he, 'to leave this accursed land; the means of doing it are within your reach; haste, let us fly, whilst, as yet, consternation reigns amongst the retinue of lord Westmoreland.'

'Never, never!' I cried; 'I will not

 deceive

deceive the generous Henry; no, my brother, I will not cast such a stain on my honour. 'If faith,' said our royal ancestor, 'dwells not in the breast of princes, where shall it reside?' No, I will return to my captivity, my life shall wear away inactive; nor France, nor England, shall brand Orleans with perfidy.'

"Again my brother assailed me, in vain rousing every latent spark of valour, of ambition. Sick of the contest, roused to madness, I bared my bosom. 'Strike,' I cried, 'if the blood of Orleans will content you, but urge me no farther; knew you not, even in childhood, I was ever stedfast in my resolves?'

"The eyes of my brother were dim with tears; whilst straining me to his heart, he bade me keep my honour inviolate—'It was my duty,' said he, 'to endeavour to restore you to your country, which needs your protection, wants the support of your arm; yet,' added he, 'I applaud, I

honour

honour the motive which urges you to resist my solicitations.'

" I begged to know by what strange chance I saw him in this desolated ruin, when he proceeded to inform me thus :—

' After the marriage of Katherine with Henry, the affairs of the dauphin Charles were desperate—banished from his capital, deserted by his nobles, Isabella his mother a declared enemy, his father, the unhappy king, the tool of her destructive arts, incapable of reflection, carried from place to place, a mere pageant of authority, exerted but to distract France with war and bloodshed. Alike were the resources of the dauphin; exhausted of money and credit, scarce had he wherewithal to supply the wants of himself and his few faithful followers—you who should have assisted with your counsels, supported him by your valour, a prisoner in England. The dauphin received private, yet sure intelligence, that

Henry meditated detaching you from him, by bestowing on you a princess of England with a large dowry, to bind you to his interest for ever; your freedom without ransom was a part of the offer: but you were to hold your lands of Henry.'—'No.' I cried to the dauphin, 'Orleans is not, cannot be a traitor to his country; allow me, my lord, I will go to England, I will seek him at the court of Henry, I will penetrate to his prison, I will bare my bosom to his sword. I will not quit him with life, unless he promises to give up those fatal engagements.'

"A small vessel was fitted out by some concealed friends at Calais; in this he embarked, and hearing the court was at York, he landed at the mouth of the Humber.

"Pretending himself a shipwrecked Norman, he was introduced to some of the queen's attendants, who mentioning his

his distress to her, she ordered his wants to be relieved; you, Cicely, heard of it, and ordered him to be brought to your presence; interested by his feigned misfortunes, you gave him some post in your family, which required his presence near you."

"Ah, Orleans!" I exclaimed, "it was his resemblance to your father, to yourself, that, spite of the disguise he wore, struck me, and made me favour him."

"As he saw you," continued the duke, "marking every word, every action, he wondered not at the love you had inspired; yet was resolved, if possible, to detach me from you, although he could not, as yet, discover any probable means; posterity, he said, shall not join the opprobrious name of traitor to the son of Valentina, my more than mother. His superior acquirements quickly procured him an interest in the hearts of the domestics of lord Westmoreland; the most secret affairs

fairs of the family were laid open to him: he learnt it had been a prophecy long current in the North, that a descendant of the Nevilles should sit on the throne of England; aware of this, and charmed by the beauty and graces of the lady Cicely, Humphrey duke of Gloucester had asked her in marriage, but that she loved him not; that I, Cicely, was the person who constantly attended you; the interview you had with the king, your subsequent agitation, all were noticed by him; depending on his feigned ignorance of the English language, he was informed by the earl's discourse to you, regarding the prophecy at the fatal ruin, and of your resolution to visit it. A tried and confidential servant of the house of Orleans, originally English, accompanied my brother to York, disguised as a Jew; he had purchased three fleet horses, and [illegible]ited his orders; with him therefore he consulted, and a plan was laid, that the disclosure

disclosure was to be made at the fatal ruin, which was perfectly known to Richard, the person of whom I speak, having himself when a child resided in it; therefore setting off without delay, he immediately took possession of that cave, which he hoped could not be known to the earl of Westmoreland. You will recollect perhaps, Cicely, that pleading indisposition, your new attendant went not with you; but ere we set off that morning, he was many miles before us on the road; Richard met and conducted him to the subterranean abode, into which he had conveyed provisions for themselves and horses. You will wonder why my brother did not reveal himself to me at York, as he intended when he first arrived; but being every day more and more convinced of my attachment to you, and the temerity of an exploit whose success he dreaded, besides the difficulty of escaping, should I con-

sent, from York; whereas the idea which so universally prevailed in regard to this solitary castle, would, they imagined, effectually conceal them, and doubted not but the awe I would feel, and the violent surprise, would aid effectually their designs; my brother was resolved, if I consented not, never to return alive to France; all matters were arranged for our escape, or, if it was necessary, our subsistence for some time in the castle. Richard was dressed in a strange fantastic garb, and watching our approach, seemed to rise out of the water—a deception which the moonlight greatly contributed to.

"Here," said the duke, "ended the relation given me by my brother, and after taking a tender adieu of him who for me had thus hazarded his life, and again assuring him I would relinquish every engagement which was inimical to France, I left him, and found you, Cicely, wildly calling

calling on my name. Ah! at that moment, how terrible were my feelings! Unable to assign a cause for breaking the engagements I had entered into with the king and earl, obliged to forsake at the very moment when at length you had owned I was no longer hated by you, that the Rose of Raby, who had triumphed over all hearts, for whom princes sighed and sued in vain, was mine for ever; yes, you had solemnly betrothed yourself to the enraptured Orleans; yet was I to throw the precious blessing from me—to renounce all that was to render my life happy; and to inflict on a heart, my greatest joy would have been to have shielded from every sorrow, a pang as forcible as I felt. I meant to have returned to York, and there informed the king, my honour would not permit me to accept his offers, and beg he would again rivet those chains his generosity had so recently broken. Afraid

of

of my frantic desperation, the earl bore me by force to Raby. I heard you were ill, yet I asked not to see you; madly loving, as I loved, how strangely had every plan I had laid hurled disgrace and misery on my own head!—I too was ill; in my frenzy I would have slain myself—I would have left, could I have left—could I have escaped, a place which was now become hateful to me, and as I recovered, every scene recalled you to me, reproaching me for your sufferings; in vain did father Francis urge me to submit to a destiny I could not avoid I had said to the earl, already disposed for the belief, that strangely had I been warned, in the Castle of Destiny, against uniting my fate to yours—that there had appeared to me all the miseries it would bring upon France, and that there I had solemnly sworn to renounce all engagements which tended to dismember her."

I had listened with rapturous attention

tion to the prince's narration, and now exclaimed—" For Cicely, you shall not bring down the curses of a whole nation on your head, nor shall you be called, in after times, the betrayer of your native land. The name of Cicely shall not be taught by the French dames to their infants, with a mark of reproach, as the seducer of the duke of Orleans, whom Henry gave to reward him for shedding the blood of their fathers; nor shall the gallant Henry upbraid you with breach of faith.—Cicely shall be the guardian angel of Orleans; she shall bind his sword, ready to be drawn against France or England, in a myrtle wreath—she will be the protector of his honour, nor shall her name be handed down with infamy to succeeding generations. When, my lord, we are safe in Piedmont, we will implore the forgiveness of the generous king, nor will he refuse to Cicely, for he has sworn

it,

it, whatever she asks. But, my Orleans, where is your brother now?"

"I knew not, till a few days ago, but that he was gone to France, when Richard, disguised as a minstrel, found means to see and inform me, that the guards which were left at the castle watched so narrowly, that to escape with their horses would be impossible; and that the dampness and cold of their dwelling had caused a lameness in one leg of my brother, which made walking impossible; they had learnt I was at Raby, by the nearness of the subterranean passage to the apartment of the chief person left by the earl. Their provisions, Richard told me, were nearly expended; those for their horses had long been so, and that they had been obliged to destroy them; they hoped, if I could procure two fleet ones and a trusty guide, that they might escape. This night is the time appointed; Jaques has procured horses sufficient for

us;

us; he will accompany us till we meet my brother, then return to you; I fear not our escape, my brother will gladly land us at * * * * *; there shall we be safe—there shall we laugh at the malice of fate and the sport of fortune."

All our plans being fixed, we parted not to meet till night had cast her shade over all, and then it was to be—ah, Matilda! I imagined, never again to part!

Ah, Matilda! pity, and, if it is possible, excuse the failings of your friend, her follies, her weakness; to you is her heart laid open—what a strange contradiction of feelings has that heart sustained! what shifting scenes of misery! here and there a gleam of sunshine gilds the dreary view; again dark clouds intervene, and night, gloomy and sullen, succeeds; it is for you, Matilda, have I retraced these scenes. I dare not look back on what I have written; and prudence would require me to palliate the step I was about

to

to take, in quitting for ever friends who loved, parents who idolized me; following into banishment a prince who refused all titles, all power, for my sake—But you shall know my heart; yes, I was going, Matilda, to forsake parents, friends,—all I loved and held dear in my native land, to live secluded from the world with him.

I had once said, let earth and seas divide us, Orleans has for ever murdered Cicely's peace. Ah! too surely the speech was prophetic—what peace has this sad bosom ever known? Here I must stop, recollecting my ideas, which have wandered back to the early period—to the very dawn of life to gratify you. Let me not murmur at the decrees of Providence, nor ask, why was my life so long? The will of Heaven is accomplished, my end approaches fast, all is fulfilled, the white rose is twined around the red. Richard lord Fitzhugh, the grandson of my brother Salisbury,